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IMAGINE™

No. 8 November 1983

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Editorial

One of the best parts of life at t'Mill is the real interest between hobbyists and the IMAGINE™ magazine folk. We happily wade through mountains of mail and receive hundreds of telephone calls. This obviously helps to maintain good contact.

I realise that many of you regard me as something of an anonymous figure. More and more frequently I am asked 'Are you an artist? Are you an RPG fanatic? Is it true that you are a biker? Why don't we see you at conventions...?' So! I am leaping out from behind the woodwork to reveal all.

I am an avid Star Trek fan and had hoped to visit **Sol III** and terrorise all dem trekkies, but sadly it was not to be. I can manage a real mean game of chess, but when I play the D&D® game I have been known to make the Dungeon Master weep. Anyway, I'm sick of being a bloodthirsty dwarf with no charisma, no IQ and a very short life expectancy. As you may well IMAGINE! I am very much into fantasy art and literature. Lovecraft, Bradbury, Clarke, Rodney Matthews, Jim Burns, Hieronymus Bosch, are magic to me. Oh, and music too. Anything from Vivaldi to Heavy Metal.

Yes I am a biker, it's an obsession that permeates the whole fibre of my being. It started when I was sixteen years old and I have never really got over the great love affair. I have happy memories as a starving artist, of burning the miles off the M1 and other country lanes with a huge folio strapped to my back and my wheels touching the ground at least once every minute.

Freedom is what both biking and the hobby are all about. Freedom to come and go. Freedom to enjoy your hobby. Freedom to stretch your imagination in a world of myth, magic and monsters, where a brave person can live by their wits and strong right arm. To boldly go....

Finally, I know from my correspondence that many of you are fellow bikers (and bikeresses). Great, that is as it should be. I shall now ride back to the ol' drawing board to earn my crust. I look forward to seeing some of you soon. Ride safe you lot!

Phil Kaye

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THE ADVENTURES OF NIC

PART EIGHT — WILDERNESS CROSSING!
YOU TRAVEL ALONG THE MAIN ROAD PAST OUTLYING FARMS. SHORTLY THE ROAD CLIMBS A WOODED HILL. AS YOU REACH THE CROWN OF THE HILL A DISHEVELLED MAN STEPS OUT OF THE BUSHES....
'GREETINGS', HE SAYS, HOLDING UP HIS HAND IN WELCOME, 'I'M TREZAR. TURN BACK NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. ABONE HAS BEEN DESTROYED, BURNT BY ORCS IN THE NIGHT. I JUST MANAGED TO ESCAPE WITH MY LIFE!
I DON'T LIKE THIS LET'S GO BACK!!
NO, I WANT TO GO ON. I'M NOT AFRAID OF ORCS!...

Beginning this month, we shall be following the adventures of Nic Novice in some detail as he participates in his first campaign. Sue is the Dungeon Master or referee who runs the adventure using the Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules. Nic and the other players each take on the persona of a character, trying to act not as themselves, but as heroic adventurers. During the course of the adventure Sue describes what they can see and informs them of what they can be reasonably expected to know. The players then react to her descriptions as they see fit.

The players have the following characters:

Nic: **Norva Ironarms** — First Level
Fighter: S18, I8, W10, D11, C15, CH9.
8 hit points. Armour Class 4 (chain mail & shield). Armed with sword, handaxe & dagger. Lawful Alignment. Nic has decided to play Norva as a fearless fighter who will not hesitate to do battle with evil creatures. He has chosen Lawful alignment as he wants to be seen as a dependable type who will willingly fight for his friends.

Jon: **Brumhold** — First Level
Fighter: S17, I7, W9, D12, C13, CH8.
7 hit points. Armour Class 2 (plate mail & shield). Armed with sword, long bow & dagger. Lawful Alignment. Brumhold's beliefs are similar to Norva's, except that he thinks all the other characters should share his beliefs. He is highly Lawful, and has difficulty reconciling this with the often necessary brutality of adventuring. In his eyes, all creatures have a right to survive, or to die honourably, even if they are chaotic and evil.

Anne: **Jolinda** — First Level
Cleric: S10, I13, W16, D9, C16, CH6.
6 hit points. Armour Class 2 (plate mail and shield). Armed with a mace. Lawful Alignment. Jolinda is a member of the Sect of the goddess Beltair. Her beliefs are more pragmatic than Brumhold's since her sect teaches that life is a struggle between Law and Chaos, a struggle that only one side can win. Therefore, she views any Chaotic creature as an abomination created by the gods of Chaos; an evil to be destroyed.

Terry: **Lemmy** — Second Level
Thief: S10, I14, W11, D16, C15, CH8.
10 hit points (Second level). Armour Class 5 (leather armour and -2 bonus for dexterity). Armed with 4 daggers and a short sword. Neutral Alignment. Lemmy is an over-cautious thief who is unwilling to take risks. Her Neutrality leans towards evil and she is more than willing to steal from the other members of the party, should the opportunity arise.

Alan: **Sarak** — First Level
Magic user: S6, I18, W9, D12, C10, CH17.
2 hit points. Armour Class 9 (no armour worn). Armed with staff and dagger. Neutral Alignment. Sarak is a different type of Neutral character; he seeks adventure in order to increase his power. He cares little what happens, providing he gains treasure and knowledge. As a magic-user he is particularly vulnerable to physical attack, and will try to stay at the back during a fight. His high Charisma makes the others look to him as a natural leader, a situation which he does not hesitate to exploit when it suits him.

With the exception of Norva they have all previously adventured and earned 1250 experience points each. In Lemmy's case this is sufficient to make her second level — thereby improving her hit points and thieving skills.

At the start of play, Sue supplies the players with some information which acts as background to the adventure:

'You are in the Dukedom of Roseway, the Eastern-most part of the Kingdom of Altom. It is summer when you meet in the Inn of the Singing Scorpion in Fangsin, a village which lies on the major trade route between the Duke's city of Havardes and the southern port of Windstow. The village is situated in an area of rich

NOVICE
..ALIAS NORVA IRONARMS!
TREZAR, IT WILL BE OF USE TO US IF YOU TELL US ALL YOU KNOW.....
THEY ATTACKED LATE LAST NIGHT!!
FEARING FOR MY LIFE I HID IN A DITCH UNTIL THEY LEFT. THEY HEADED EAST JUST BEFORE DAWN, GRUNTING IN THEIR ACCURSED TONGUE....

farmlands along the banks of the Rambling River. To the east rise the Teardrop Mountains, a place well known to you, where many evil and chaotic monsters have their lairs.

'While in the Inn you overhear a conversation between a farmer and the landlord concerning orc raids on farms around the nearby village of Abone.'

The players decide that this is worth looking into and leave Fangsin, following the road to Abone. Outside the Inn they form themselves into a marching order in case they are attacked while on the road.

To help in running this part of the adventure Sue has previously prepared a map of the countryside. On it she has drawn the two villages, the road between them and various terrain features such as forests, rivers, hills, mountains, etc. She has also marked the map with encounter areas where she has placed things of interest to the players.

As the players near Abone, they reach the first encounter on the map. Sue describes what they see on their journey up to this point, and concludes:

'You travel along the main road past outlying farms. After walking for a few hours you climb a wooded hill, and a dishevelled man steps from the bushes in front of you.'

Looking at her notes, Sue sees that Trezar is a 0-level character and is the only remaining resident of Abone. The other inhabitants are either dead or have been carried off by orcs. With this information in mind she plays Trezar as a Non Player Character (NPC) having him converse with the players and react to their questions.

Sarak — 'Where are your people?'

Sue (Trezar) — 'Most of them are dead. The orcs killed them, and those they did not kill, they took with them.'

Brumhold — 'What manner of man are you to hide while others are carried off by orcs?'

Sarak — 'Easy Brumhold. He's probably afraid...'

Jolinda comes quickly to have sympathy for the poor wretch — 'What will you do now Trezar? Will you come with us to free your people?'

Sue decides that Trezar has been through enough, and has not been reassured by Brumhold's rough manners. She tells the players that he looks frightened; they can clearly see that he is shaking in his boots!'

Sue (Trezar) — 'I.... I'll go to Fangsin. I'm not go.... going after orcs. I'll be killed like my brothers.'

Listening to this tale, the two fighters become impatient.

Brumhold — 'Bah! This man's a coward. Let's follow them before it gets too late.'

Norva follows the lead of his more experienced colleague; Nic is determined that Norva will show Brumhold that he too is a brave warrior — 'Yes. Let's show the orcs they can't attack humankind and get away with it.'

Brumhold — 'I'm with you Norva.'

Lemmy — 'Maybe we should go back to Fangsin as well. There must have been a lot of orcs to wipe out a village.'

Sarak can see no likely profit in this — 'We will continue, thief.... I'll never become rich sitting around in the Singing Scorpion Inn watching you twiddling your thumbs.'

Brumhold — 'I'm looking around towards the east of the village to see if I can find a trail.'

Sue quickly refers to her map which shows the orc's trail leading to their lair.

Sue (DM) — 'You can see a very clear trail where the orcs have trampled through the fields. It leads towards the mountains.'

To be continued....

BY JIM BAMBRA AND PAUL RUIZ

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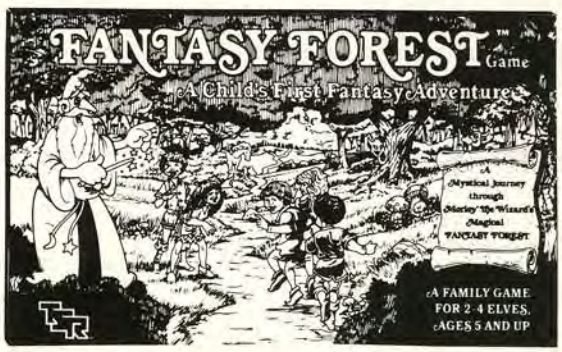

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STIRGE CORNER

The Advanced rulebooks are packed with information, but there are some strange omissions....
Like, how big is a gold piece?

A page for the not-so-experienced adventurer

by Roger Musson

This month, a little puzzle in three parts. A party investigating a deep dungeon level discovers a cave in which is a copper dragon sitting on a huge pile of treasure. They slay the dragon, and examine the treasure — there is a small wooden chest, 1'x1'x1', which turns out to be chock-full of gold pieces. The rest of the pile is, alas, all copper pieces. (What do you expect from a copper dragon?) Nevertheless, Theregond the magician, having nothing else to carry, decides to help himself to a sackful of copper pieces.

Question one: how many gold pieces are there in the box?
Question two: how many copper pieces are in the pile?
Question three: how many copper pieces does Theregond cart away in his sack?

These may sound like the sort of questions you have to answer at church fêtes to win the jar of sweets, but, as DM, it is very important to know how much space is occupied by any amount of treasure.

Curiously, the rule books are silent on this. Considering how the Advanced rule books are packed with all sorts of information I have never wanted, like how fast a kobold miner can tunnel through soft rock, there are strange omissions when it comes to more mundane matters. Like, how big is a gold piece?

Fortunately, we are told that 10gp equals 1lb weight (though why some weights are given in gold pieces and others in pounds, I know not; nor can I tell why 'pound' is abbreviated to a hash instead of the more conventional '1lb'). Using this information, plus knowing the density of gold, it is possible to work out how big a gold piece actually is. I'll spare you the actual sums, but the result is that a standard gold piece is slightly larger than a 50p coin. Which seems reasonable.

Heavy stuff

Now we can work out the answer to question one. A useful guide when working out how much space will be occupied by a treasure, is to consider this: a hundred gold pieces, neatly stacked, will make a column 1' high, and about 1" across (actually slightly more, but we don't need to go into two decimal places here, do we?). So as a rough rule of thumb, 100gp = 12 cubic inches. Our box, which is not all that big at 1 cubic foot, therefore holds approximately 14,400gp. More than you thought? Next time you tell players that they see a big chest full of gold pieces, consider how much treasure that really is! You might also like to note in passing that with that number of gps inside, our box weighs in at $^2/_3$ of a ton — gold is heavy stuff!

Now for the heap of copper pieces. How big is a heap? How long is a ball of string? Nevertheless, the heap has to be big enough for a dragon to sit on it. Suppose it is a small dragon, 10' long, not a real Smaug-type dragon, it might manage to perch on a heap, 12' long, 5' wide, 5' high at the top; let us say, very roughly, 150 cu ft. Not a really big heap that.... I make it a bit over two million cp. So let us not have "2000gp in a big heap" from anyone anymore, please.

Rule of thumb

How many cp does Theregond get away in his sack? There used to be a rule in the original D&D® game that a large sack could hold 300gp — you could get more than that in a cereal packet, never mind a sack. A moderate-sized sack should hold in excess of 2 cu ft, which as we know, is about 30,000gp, much too heavy to carry. So the limitation on Theregond is not on how many coins fit into his sack, but how much weight he can bear. If I were him I would not fancy tramping the tunnels with a burden of more than 100lb, which would work out at 1,000gp. Except that it is copper pieces that are in question, and guess what, copper doesn't weigh the same as gold.

By great good fortune, the following rule of thumb is as near as dammit accurate: assuming all coins are the same size, then their weights work out as follows — 1pp = 1gp = 2ep = 2sp = 2cp. Therefore, assuming that Theregond does not want to strain himself too much, he can get away with about 2,000cp in his sack.

There is, of course, no reason why in your campaign coins of different metals should be the same sizes. If you want to simplify things so as to have all coins equal in weight, for ease of calculating loads on Tenser's Disc and the like, you can make the lesser coins double in size, so long as you remember that they take up twice as much space that way. But personally I fancy making the lower coins smaller — so often, allocating large amounts of copper treasure in a dungeon is a waste of time — it's worth so little that players simply leave it. But if a copper piece is half the size of a gold piece and half as dense, it becomes easier to carry out and therefore worth taking. A half-size copper piece would mean that a player normally restricted to carrying 1,000 coins (gold) could carry 4,000 coppers. Still not worth very much, but an improvement. (Imagine going to buy a new car and paying for it all in 1p and 2p pieces!)

Precious metal

A final thing to note. You may feel inclined to have the local ruler in your campaign debase the coinage, if you don't like the thought of so much precious metal in circulation, or for any campaign reason. Remember that a debased gp will be noticeably lighter (recall Archimedes in his bath?) since gold is denser than almost anything, including lead. Unless, of course, the ruler chooses to debase gold pieces by adding platinum (which is rather pointless) or iridium (which is silly) or neptunium (which is silly and radioactive to boot)!

Roger Musson

***Stirge Corner** will provide more hints for players next month. If you find this feature useful, remember that back issues of IMAGINE™ magazine are available from TSR for £1.50.*

Cantrips

by Gary Gygax

0-level magics, for AD&D apprentice wizards

*This article, the first of a two part series on Cantrips for magic users and illusionists, first appeared in our sister publication, **DRAGON® magazine**, issues 59, 60 and 61 (March / April / May 1982). It is reproduced by kind permission of that journal's editor.*

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Cantrips are, simply, 0-level magic-user spells, the spells learned and used by apprentices during their long, rigorous and tedious training for the crafts of magic use. Most cantrips are simple little spells of no great effect, so when the individual becomes a journeyman (1st-level) magic-user, the knowledge and information pertaining to these small magics are discarded in favour of the more powerful spells then available. However, a magic-user may opt to remember up to four cantrips in place of one 1st-level spell. This assumes that the magic-user has retained his or her book of cantrips — a tome as large as a good-sized book of higher-level spells.

The number and type of cantrips known and recorded is determined by random use of the tables below. The exception is the table of Useful Cantrips — those which were employed to make apprenticeship less wearisome. An apprentice will have one of these for each point of intelligence, and is allowed a free choice from the list of 20 offered.

All cantrips are 0-level, have a 1" range, generally a small area of effect, require only soft, simple verbal and somatic components, and are cast in a very short ($^1/_{10}$th to $^1/_2$ segment) time. Only those which involve living creatures afford any saving throw. The common cantrips are:

No.	Useful Cantrips	Reversed (2-8)	Legerdemain (2-5)
1.	Chill	Curdle	Change
2.	Clean	Dirty	Distract
3.	Colour	Dusty	Hide
4.	Dampen	Hairy	Mute
5.	Dry	Knot	Palm
6.	Dust	Ravel	Present
7.	Exterminate	Sour	
8.	Flavour	Spill	
9.	Freshen	Tangle	
10.	Gather	Tarnish	
11.	Polish	Untie	
12.	Salt	Wilt	
13.	Shine		
14.	Spice		
15.	Sprout		
16.	Stitch		
17.	Sweeten		
18.	Tie		
19.	Warm		
20.	Wrap		

No.	Person (2-8)	Personal (2-8)	Haunting (2-5)
1.	Belch	Bee	Creak
2.	Blink	Bluelight	Footfall
3.	Cough	Bug	Groan
4.	Giggle	Firefinger	Moan
5.	Nod	Gnats	Rattle
6.	Scratch	Mouse	Tap
7.	Sneeze	Smokepuff	Thump
8.	Twitch	Spider	Whistle
9.	Wink	Tweek	
10.	Yawn	Unlock	

Useful Cantrips

Chill *(Evocation)*
Area of Effect: *1' cube* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

A cantrip of this nature will cause liquid or solid material to become about 40°F cooler than it was, subject to a minimum temperature of freezing. If the subject is living matter, the effect of the cantrip will be halved and will not lower temperature more than 10° below normal for that creature. Verbal component is a soft whistling, somatic is a downward-thrust thumb.

Clean *(Abjuration)*
A of E: *4 square yards* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip removes heavy soil, dirt and like foreign objects from floors, walls, dishes, windows etc. The subject surfaces are then spotless, but care must be taken in removal of pigments and the like, so usually only one type of material will be treated in a single application. Verbal component is a low outrush of air, somatic is a circular hand motion.

Colour *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1 cubic yard* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This brings colour to an object. It can be used to restore faded hues or to tinge those already coloured with a different hue. Thus, dull or faded fabric can be brightened, pigments restored, or even hair or skin changed to another colour. The effect must be renewed every 30 days. Verbal component is humming, somatic is a back-and-forth or wringing hand motion.

Dampen *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1 cubic yard* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

When a cantrip of this sort is cast, the subject area is permeated by a fog-like dampness which leaves all material within it damp to the touch. It is useful for many sorts of things. It is hard on parchment, and makes it and like substances difficult to set aflame. Verbal component is a low hooting or a hummed ditty, somatic is a hand gesture upwards with writhing fingers.

Dry *(Abjuration)*
A of E: *1 cubic yard* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

The cantrip removes dampness and excess moisture from materials within the subject area. It is useful for cloth, herbs and cleaning chores. Verbal component is similar to that of the *dampen* cantrip, and the somatic is a two-handed wringing motion.

Dust *(Abjuration)*
A of E: *10' radius* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This removes all fine dust and tiny grit particles from exposed surfaces such as floors, shelves, walls etc. Material so removed is transported elsewhere, but new dust can accumulate, of course. Verbal component is a continuous in-drawing of breath, somatic is a back-and-forth hand motion.

Exterminate *(Abjuration)*
A of E: *One very small creature* CT: $^1/_{10}$ *segment*

When this cantrip is used, the caster may kill a small pest such as a fly, mouse, rat, beetle or the like. It is very useful for both indoor and outdoor applications. If the subject is very small, an area of up to $^1/_2$ cubic foot can be rid of pests. The somatic gesture is a pointed finger, while the caster verbalizes a low 'zzzt' sound.

Flavour *(Enchantment)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip enables the caster to give the subject a superior or completely different flavour. Thus, toasted marshmallows could be made to taste as if they were lobster bisque, but the dweomer would not actually affect the quality or wholesomeness of the subject. Thus, spoiled food would remain spoiled; a poisoned drink would still be just as deadly. The verbal component is a muttered lip-smacking sound; the somatic gesture is a shaking motion.

Freshen *(Enchantment)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

By means of this cantrip the caster brings new life or freshness to the object desired. The magic applies to food and drink items such as milk, beer, meat and raw vegetables. It also works with cut vegetables, flowers, herbs, etc. Although it will remove a faint taint of spoilage, restore drooping flowers, and so on, it lasts for only an hour. The subject must be of relatively small size, ie a small cask of liquid, a sheep, a bushel of vegetables, etc. Verbal component is a 'mmmmm' sound, while the hand makes a mystic symbol with thumb and forefinger forming a circle and the other fingers upright and apart.

Gather *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 square yard* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

This cantrip enables the caster to gather numerous small objects into a neat stack or pile. For instance, if nails, nuts, coins, papers, or like objects were spilled, the magic would bring them together. It can be used selectively, for instance to separate one type of material from another, but only the selected type would be gathered neatly. The caster verbalizes the type of material to be gathered while making a gathering motion.

Polish *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

When this cantrip is employed, the caster magically smooths and brings lustre to materials such as wood, metal, stone, leather or ceramic. Naturally, the desired object must be relatively clean in order for the cantrip to be effective. The object affected must be of reasonable size — a floor of up to 1,000 square feet, an armoire etc. It works better on smaller objects, of course, such as boots, mirrors, crystal containers etc. The caster hums a ditty while making a buffing motion.

Salt *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

This causes a sprinkling of fine salt to magically appear and descend on some desired object — a stew, some troublesome weed patch, or a barrel full of stock fish to be preserved. The object must be a reasonable size — up to perhaps 4 square yards in area or about 30 gallons liquid volume. Care must be taken to avoid over-salting if the object involved is smaller, and if the object is larger, it will not receive much salt. Verbal component is a labial smacking, while the hand makes a sprinkling motion.

Shine *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

Similar to the *polish* cantrip above, this magic allows the caster to remove tarnish, rust, corrosion and like substances from the desired object. This cantrip brings about a mirror-bright shine to objects capable of such, causing their surfaces to be smooth and unmarred. A piece of jewelry, for instance, would be made more attractive, and even its gems better (+1 on die rolls). A single object up to about 1 cubic yard in volume can be treated by this cantrip. Verbal and somatic components are similar to *polish*.

Spice *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

Unlike the cantrip *flavour*, this magic actually brings a particular spice to the object food or drink. Thus, ginger, pepper and like spices can be brought to add zest (or disguise). Herbs such as

bay leaf, garlic, parsley, etc can likewise be evoked by this. The quantity is sufficient to spice food or drink for about a dozen people. The spice (or herb) appears over the object vessel as a fine powder or flake, falls upon it, and adds its substance to the dish or drink. A ditty is hummed while the hand makes a crumbling and sprinkling motion.

Sprout *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 cubic yard* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

By means of this cantrip, the caster causes acceleration in the growth of plants, particularly to the germination of plant seeds. Upon casting, the cantrip will cause seeds to shoot forth tiny sprouts, buds to flower, etc. Fruits and vegetables will ripen (or actually go past ripening to spoilage). A sussurant sound is verbalized while the caster's hand makes hoeing motions.

Stitch *(Alteration)*
A of E: *Special* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip magically sews seams in cloth or leather. It will make new ones or repair old work. About 20 yards of cloth can thus be stitched, but only about 2 yards of leather. The seam created is neither stronger nor weaker than a seam done without magic. Usually a brief rhyme is recited as the hand makes a sewing motion.

Sweeten *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip is the same as the *spice* cantrip, except that the result is the evocation of a sweetener — sugar, honey, or even a syrup. The components are a buzzing sound and a stirring motion.

Tie *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

By means of this cantrip the caster can magically cause the object — thread, string, cord, rope or even cable — to knot itself tightly to either its other end or an end of a similar object within 1' of it. The resulting knot will be a normal one such as a square knot, half-hitch, running bowline, or whatever the caster desires. The caster verbalizes the name of the knot desired while holding up three fingers.

Warm *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1'*cube CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip is the same as *chill* except that the magic brings a warming of the liquid or solid. The temperature will rise about 40° F at most. The cantrip will never cause living creatures to become warmer than their normal body temperature. Components are an 'aaah' sound while the hands are rubbed briskly together.

Wrap *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 cubic yard* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

When a *wrap* cantrip is employed, the caster creates a strong and sturdy wrapping around the subject — a bit of herbs, a heap of flour, a bundle of cloth, etc. The material of the cantrip is of a suitable type and thickness for the item(s) to be wrapped. Thus, a few ounces of powder will be contained in a waxy tissue, gem stones in a felt-like envelope, meal in cloth, and so forth. The wrapping can be opened normally, but the caster can just as easily order it to open, so the cantrip is often used to enfold the material components of a spell. The caster verbalizes a general class of wrapping desired while making folding motions with the hands.

Reversed Cantrips

Curdle *(Enchantment)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

This cantrip is broader in effect than its name suggests, for it affects many food and drink items. The magic curdles milk and hastens spoilage or wilting. It has a permanent effect on the object. It is otherwise similar to *freshen*. The caster verbalizes a retching sound while pointing the thumb downward.

Dirty *(Evocation)*
A of E: *4 square yards* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

The opposite of the *clean* cantrip, this lets casters soil, spot and sully walls, floors, dishes, garments, etc. Verbal component is a spitting sound, made while shuffling and stamping the feet.

Dusty *(Alteration)*
A of E: *10'* radius CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

By means of this cantrip the caster causes a thin film of dust and grime to settle upon all exposed surfaces within the cantrip's area of effect. Verbal component is a low humming, while the hands make shaking motions.

Hairy *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_{10}$ *segment*

While this cantrip is not one of the standard 'useful' ones which apprentices reverse for mischievousness, it is one which is used for no good purpose. It causes hair, fur, or hair-like growth to

thicken and lengthen. Thus, a head of hair, a peach, a beard, a cat or whatever could be affected. The growth will cause the subject material to increase from 2-12 inches in length, and must be cut to remove the cantrip's effect. This cantrip can be reversed to shorten growth or effectively shave, but as the effect on short material (growth under 1 inch in length) is complete absence of growth for 2-12 days, it is not often used. The caster verbalizes snicking sounds while making massaging motions for growth, or scissoring motions for removal.

Knot *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

This cantrip is a permutation of *tie*. It causes thread, string, cord or rope to knot itself in such a way as to be very difficult to untie, and from 2-8 rounds, less dexterity bonus for reaction of the individual untying the *knot* to undo. It works even on material already affected by a *tie* spell. The caster verbalizes a 'zzzz' sound while moving the arm forward with a strong wrist motion.

Ravel *(Alteration)*
A of E: *Special* CT: $^1/_{10}$ *segment*

This cantrip is the reverse of *stitch*. It will work only if there is a loose or broken thread in the seam or fabric to be affected, except for material magically stitched by the appropriate cantrip. When the latter sort of seam or material is involved, the *ravel* cantrip will always work, except in the case where the subject is otherwise magical, ie a **bag of holding**, a **cloak of protection**, **boots of elvenkind** etc. The name of the cantrip is verbalized while the fingers make a plucking motion.

Sour *(Evocation)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

When this cantrip is employed, the caster causes the subject food or drink to take on a sour taste, not unlike vinegar of the appropriate sort. While it is typically used to spoil wine, beer, or some pastry, the *sour* cantrip can be used to some useful purpose. The magic actually causes a pint of vinegar (maximum) to appear over the subject. This can be an empty container in which such a liquid is desired. The caster purses the lips and makes a whooshing sound while clenching the hand.

Spill *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 container* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

The opposite of the *gather* cantrip, this enables the caster to cause the contents of a container to spill out. The object container is actually tipped by the cantrip, so, as it is not powerful, containers of more than about a gallon size, or magical ones, will not be affected. Solids and/or liquids within the container will spill out, providing the container is not securely closed or capped. The caster verbalizes an 'oh-oh' sound while making an abrupt hand motion.

Tangle *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_6$ *segment*

A permutation of the *tie* cantrip, this magic allows the caster to cause fine material such as thread, hair, small grass, and the like to become twisted and entwined in a tangle. It will not work on heavy material such as rope. Untangling subject material will take 3-12 rounds, unless it is roughly done — and the material is broken and snapped in the process, torn loose, etc.The cantrip will tangle mixed materials such as grass and string. A buzzing is verbalized while the finger makes a stirring motion.

Tarnish *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

The reverse of the *shine* cantrip, this causes a covering of rust, corrosion, verdigris or the like to cover an object normally subject to such tarnishing. The object must be of about 1 cubic yard or less in volume. Verbal component is a spitting sound, while the hand makes a sprinkling motion.

Untie *(Alteration)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_3$ *segment*

This permutation of the *tie* cantrip is simply the reverse of the magic. The caster selects an object — thread, string, cord, etc — which is knotted or tied. The cantrip removes the *knot* or tying. Note that the *untie* cantrip will cause a *tangle* to be nullified. The cantrip will not remove both a *knot* and a normal tying (normal knot or one caused by a *tie* cantrip), but it will cause the former to disappear so that only a normal tying remains. Somatic and verbal components vary according to the desired result. In general a popping sound is made while the hands are pulled apart — either as if a knot were being untied or a cord snapped.

Wilt *(Enchantment)*
A of E: *1 object* CT: $^1/_2$ *segment*

A reverse of the *freshen* cantrip which affects only vegetable material — whether growing or picked. Thus a plant can be made to wilt (or possibly wither if it is not too healthy) or a bunch of cut flowers droop and sag. Verbal component is a descending hum, while the forefinger is slowly curled from an upright position.

Gary Gygax

More magic user and illusionist cantrips next month, when we will also publish ***Lyndum****, a special 0-level scenario by Jim Bambra for you to try them out in.*

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

By Stephen Foster

Anyone who has ever run a magic user as a character, and this surely means all fantasy gamers, must have noticed that there is one difference between fighter characters and magic using characters which is difficult to reconcile. Fighter type characters tend to have rich and extensive backgrounds; details of their lives before they took up adventuring and ideas of what they actually do with their spare time. This is only natural, since all these things can be derived from the lives of the people of our own medieval history. However there were no genuine magic users in history, and so we have no such wealth of information to draw upon to flesh out the magicians in our games. Consequently, there is a lack of understanding of the motives and attitudes of these characters which not only hinders good role playing, but also cuts a referee or player off from many situations in which a knowledge of the lifestyle of a magician can lead to very interesting adventures. Even in fantasy literature there are precious few details on which to base a characterisation, since the average novel or story deals only with the adventures of a magician. I hope in this article to give you an idea of what being a magic user really means.

A magician's working life begins at about the age of eight. At this age, well-to-do and wealthy parents will present their younger sons and daughters to the Magicians' Guild. These are the children who have very little coming in the way of inheritances and whose parents would like to find a respectable position for them. Officers of the Guild examine these applicants and choose the tiny percentage who have the physical stamina, quickness of wit and psychic talents necessary to become a magician. This is not the only way of being accepted however, for solitary mages often choose bright children from the poorer classes to be their apprentices, even though their parents could never afford the substantial Guild fee. The young child will then leave his home and family to live with the Master who chose him or to whom he has been assigned. He will live with the other apprentices of that magician, as most tutoring magic users have three or four apprentices at various stages of instruction under them. These will tease and bully the newcomer, of course, but in the end they will become the closest friends he has throughout life — or the greatest of enemies!

Life for the young apprentice is hard. He must learn to read and write not only his own tongue, but the difficult languages used in the Arcane Volumes as well; he must learn mathematics and astrology and become fully conversant with the intricacies of elementary alchemy. On top of this he will be assigned household chores, since few mages can afford to feed both apprentices and servants. Eventually, when the apprentice is about thirteen, his Master will start instructing him in the sorcerous arts. At first there will be little practical experience and the apprentice will spend most of his time reading worm-eaten volumes on theoretical magic or being drilled in elementary rituals by the senior apprentice. Soon however, he will be instructed in minor spells and may even be allowed to assist his Master in a ritual. More and more demanding tasks will be given to him, until, by the time he is about twenty years old, he has become his Master's valued assistant and confidant — and at last a competent thaumaturgist in his own right. One day he will be taken to his first Guild meeting and undergo the secret initiation rite. His Master will, by tradition, pay for the first year of membership, but then the former apprentice will leave the home of the person who has become another parent to him and seek his own way in the world. The apprentice has now become a Journeyman in the eyes of the Guild. He is entitled and licensed to practise Magic (which is illegal without Guild membership, of course) and he will find a position for himself. This will be a dull life compared to adventuring. He will probably be the resident magician in a village, or one of a number of such in a small town. He will earn his living by casting horoscopes, curing crop diseases and performing other trivial services for the largely illiterate masses. This is how most mages spend their lives and in fact few are seized with the insane desire to risk life and limb in some monster-ridden catacomb when they can make a respectable income as a simple Journeyman instead.

The other apprentices will tease and bully the newcomer, of course, but in the end they will become the closest of friends, or the greatest of enemies

Some mages are not satisfied with such a life. These men and women are normally superior students who lust for adventure, or more arcane knowledge, or both. They quickly surpass their fellow Journeymen in skill and power, and when they feel ready they will make application to the Guild to become Adepts. There is an examination, of course, and as well as the fee, it is customary to present one's examiners with small gifts. (The examiners in this and other tests are always three mages of the rank that the applicant wishes to attain — in this case, Adepts.) The examiners will ask the applicant to perform a minor task, such as determining the contents of a locked box, or lighting a candle without touching it, followed by a short interview. If he or she passes the test, then that person is entitled to the new rank and will be allowed or assigned more responsible work — possibly as adviser or personal mage to a local noble. The Guild will only assign such posts to a member whom they feel is qualified; so there is a real incentive to advance to a more lucrative level.

There are, of course, several other levels above Adept, and each is attained in a similar way. The next higher position is that of Master, and the test which must be passed to attain this rank is more difficult. The traditional test is to remove (without using force) a key from a locked chest which is set in metal in a block of stone. From this rank, a mage may aspire to become a Doctor (for which he must demonstrate several powerful spells to his examiners) and finally Wizard (for which the applicant must research some new spell or create some magical device and then demonstrate it to his superiors). It is worth noting, however, that rumours mention a sixth and even higher level within the Guild — The Cogniscenti, an

extremely powerful and secretive group of political activists for whom membership is by invitation only!

It is the Magic Guild that forms the core of a magician's social life, so a little must be said about its aims and nature. The Guild is (supposedly) the non-political organisation to which the right to practise magic belongs. It is usually the Guild that finds and assigns work to its members, selecting for each one those tasks to which he is most suited and ensuring that the more capable members receive tasks in proportion to their abilities. The Guild is a professional society where members can discuss their work and researches in detail and keep up to date with recent advances. It provides accommodation of various degrees of comfort to members who require it, at reasonable rates, and, most importantly, the Guild has several laboratories with assistants, stocks of materials etc, which can be used by magicians engaged in research.

Within the Guild there are numerous semi-official sub-groups called 'houses' and a member may belong to as many houses as he wishes — or will have him. Each house is simply a group of magicians with a common aim or interest: such as The Association of Alchemists (a very popular house), The Brotherhood of the Great Grimoire (a group of almost senile and very conservative scholars) and The Green Claw (a semi-secret and dangerous group of political activists). The Guild takes no interest in who belongs to which house, or in the doings of the house (no matter what they are) but if inter-house feuds get out of hand then the High Council of the Guild may be forced to step in. Such feuds, and the desire to gain prestige over another house, are fairly frequent and often involve other Guild members or even non-members.

There are several elective offices in the Guild, open to anyone of the rank of Adept or above. These posts carry a small salary and a few other perks. The highest positions are on the High Council and are suitable only for Wizards. The High Council is responsible for the administration of the Guild and its rules and also for maintaining order. Most Guild members agree that it is best not to draw the attention of the Council, and so prefer to perform any illegal acts far away from the Guildhouse.

A very important feature of the Guild is its library. Each major city will contain a Guildhouse with an extensive library of tomes on all subjects of a magical nature. However, these books can be very dangerous in the wrong hands and are classified into a number of restriction classes. These are quite straightforward: a book classified as Master level may only be read by a mage of the rank of Master or above. The Guild Librarian, who is usually a Wizard or Doctor, is responsible for the care of these books and the workings of the security system. Often, a book in the library will be needed to assist in the researching of a new spell or magical item, and if the restriction level of the book is too high, then a magic user may be forced to abandon his work temporarily. Stealing, or rather attempting to steal, restricted books is not a good idea. A Guild library is one of the most powerfully defended areas in an entire city!

So, a magician's professional and social life revolves around the Guild. Here there will be people of similar interests, adventurers with a fine tale to tell, cheap accommodation and, best of all, a cheap Guild tavern! Many lands have a saying that a particularly weird or dangerous idea sounds as though 'it were hatched in the Guild inn'; so one can imagine the plots, adventures and just plain treasons that take place within its walls.

Bringing the above details into your own campaign is quite easy. Since this article is meant to be an aid to the imagination, not a set of tables, there is little to do in the way of paperwork to use these ideas. Secondly, they are independent of any gaming system, so just adjust them to whichever one you use. Incidentally, where sums of money are mentioned, I have used the 'Ale Standard' and you can use this to get an idea of the real costs.

1. Training.

The costs of being an apprentice are quite high. For each of the eleven or so years of training the apprentice sorceror must find 100gp in fees (this is about £2,000 in

modern terms, or about the cost of public school education). The mage will make little or no profit out of this, since the low cost of training an apprentice in his early years is offset by the high cost of materials needed in the latter stages of training. Any players who take on an apprentice must be made to devote considerable time and resources to the training of their charges.

2. Guild Rank.

It must be remembered that Guild rank and the 'level' of a magic user character are two entirely different things. For example, a D&D® game 'Wizard' who took no interest in Guild affairs might choose to remain a Journeyman in Guild ranking. By and large, however, Guild rank is a rough indicator of actual 'level'. In the terms of the D&D game, the Guild ranks correspond to the following:

Journeyman: magic users levels 1-4.
Adept: magic users levels 4-8.
Master: magic users levels 8-10.
Doctor: magic users levels 10-12.
Wizard: magic users levels 12+.

Guild members pay a yearly membership fee of 25gp (tax-deductable of course!). Those holding Guild office will receive a salary of 10-20gp per month, depending on the seniority of the office, and will be expected to devote considerable time to their duties.

3. Houses.

There should be about 30 houses in the average large-city Guild. Of these about half will be 'open' houses; that is to say that any magician may become a member. The rest will be split between 'restricted' houses (those for which some entrance qualification is necessary) and 'secret' houses (politically or religiously active societies). 'Open' houses have memberships of 200-300, but 'restricted' and 'secret' ones usually have only 20-30 members. 'Secret' houses do, however, have members who are not magicians, but high-ranking merchants, soldiers, etc. All houses charge a small additional membership fee of 5-10gp per annum, but 'secret' houses often demand far greater commitment.

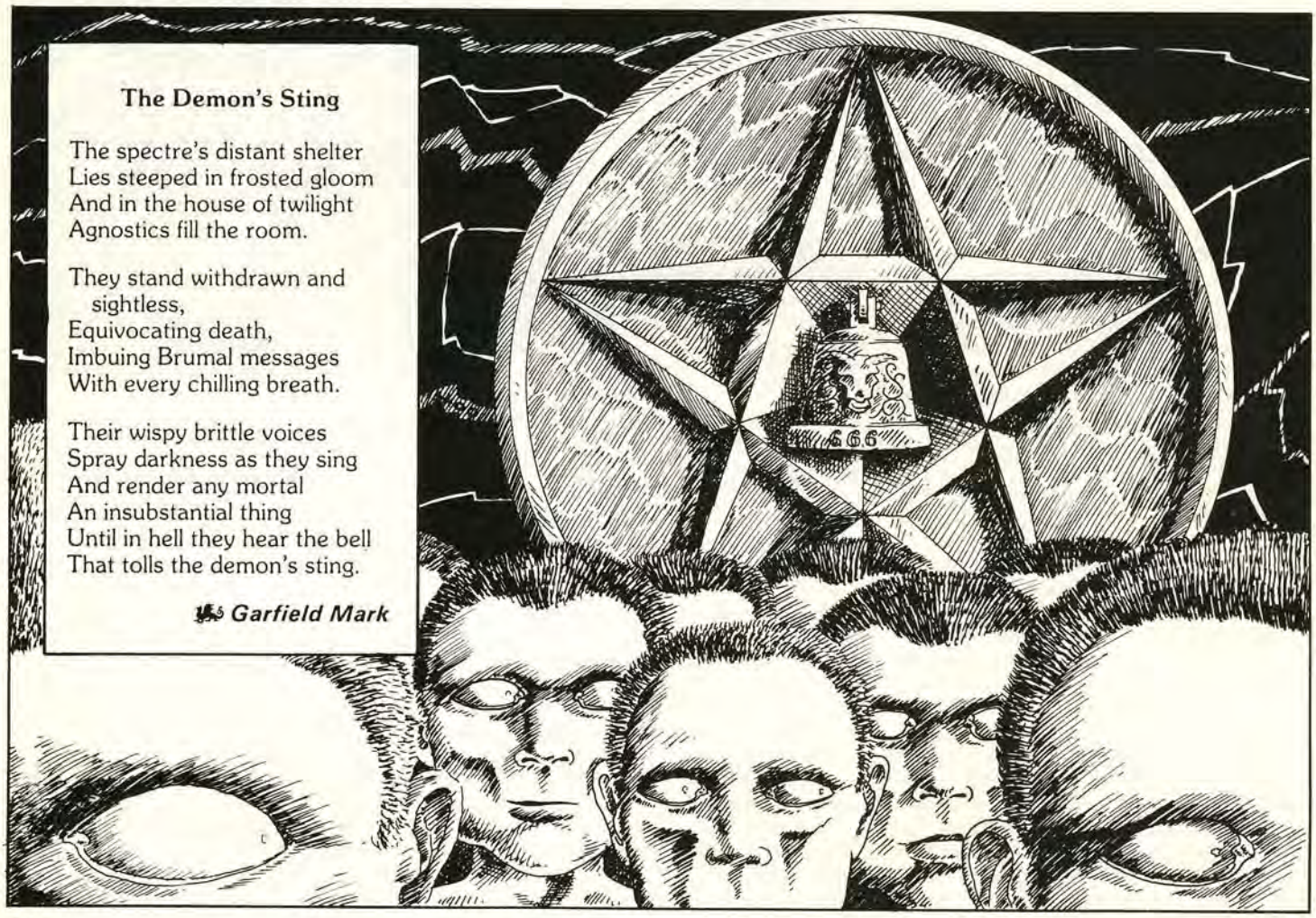
4. Adventure.

A magician's background can provide a lot of scope for new adventures and scenarios. A useful NPC for a DM to have is the 'recurrent enemy' who crops up time and time again, even when the players are sure that he is dead. For such a character the former fellow apprentice of a player magic user is ideal, and in this way a DM can add a lot of colour to a campaign.

Inter-house rivalry is useful as a basis for an adventure. These groups are always vying for status and often organise raids on each other's meeting places. For example, the House of Necromantic Knowledge may wish to recover the enchanted skull of a former member which has fallen into the hands of the Dwellers in Darkness. To cover their involvement, the operation may be carried out by hired mercenaries. Such adventures will involve a lot of magic, both spells and items, and could be very rewarding for players who take part.

The most interesting basis for adventure is the 'secret' house and its fanatical activities. Players will often regret the day that they became involved with these groups, as they are normally powerful enough to keep any player in his place. It is not necessary for any player to make open contact with one of these groups, it may be enough for the DM to decide that, say, the ring just stolen by the players contains a secret and incriminating message for the Grand Master of the Green Claw — and already the word is out! However, unless a DM likes bloodbaths, such encounters are best kept rare.

Steve Foster



The Demon's Sting

The spectre's distant shelter
Lies steeped in frosted gloom
And in the house of twilight
Agnostics fill the room.

They stand withdrawn and
sightless,
Equivocating death,
Imbuing Brumal messages
With every chilling breath.

Their wispy brittle voices
Spray darkness as they sing
And render any mortal
An insubstantial thing
Until in hell they hear the bell
That tolls the demon's sting.

Garfield Mark

Green Shadows

by Dray Prescot

as told to

Alan Burt Akers

In their engaging way the Star Lords hurled me headlong into rip-roaring, blood-pulsing adventure stark-naked and unarmed — and, as well as adventure, into diabolical situations where I could get myself killed with spine-shattering ease. Like now.

The situation into which I tumbled was clear, simple and deadly. The Star Lords sent their phantom Blue Scorpion, all gigantic and glowing, to snatch me up from home and dump me down here where squamous monsters with fangs and exceedingly sharp claws sought to rip me up for a light snack. In a gravel-floored cavern, lit by pale phosphorescent fires, I, Dray Prescot of Earth and Kregen, had to be about my business with a sharp promptitude.

'Be quick! Or we're all dead!' The woman crouched against the rock and screamed it out. The two men with her just screamed.

On the gravel a few paces off lay a harness of plate armour. From its breaths and sights a green ichor flowed. The cavern stank with the raw odour of rotting flesh. In the visor an Acid-Head Gimlet stuck fast, the gauzy wings of the dragonfly killer, still shimmering with pseudo-life, reflected in the blade of the sword as it tumbled onto the gravel.

Time only to feel a heartbeat of sorrow for the poor devil who'd worn the plate — a gloating hissing and movement against the cavern's pale radiance snatched my attention. In the mouth of the tunnel ahead bulked the monstrous shape of a reptile-man, and from his green-taloned hand a second Acid-Head Gimlet flew.

The wings shimmered in the phosphorescent light. The gimlet head glistened with the acid that would melt me down to the soles of my naked feet. No time to do anything but dive forward in a desperate try for the sword fallen from the armour's opened gauntlet.... My fingers touched the hilt, knocked it a handsbreadth across the gravel. No time now to curse, to do anything but scrabble forward, sieze the sword and flick it up in the way the Krozair Disciplines taught.

The Acid-Head Gimlet bounced against the blade, caromed off, and buried his deadly head into the rock.

The reptilian monster-man charged. He was not as deadly as his pets. His sword, a huge and ponderous affair, swung up as I slipped on the loose gravel, and the blade sliced down like a sickle of the Reapers of Men. A roll saved me so that I could hurl myself up and snout my borrowed weapon forward. The sword was a serviceable cut and thruster, a thraxter, so I gripped it in both hands and drove straight on. The blade slid in and in. After a moment in which I felt the sensations of a man trapped in a whirlwind, his convulsions ceased.

An old fighting man does not wait around after a single combat. There would be plenty more monsters in this labyrinth, and although I bore them no ill will, I fully intended to do my best to keep my head on my shoulders. Instantly, I leaped away to the side, slimed blade up, ready for the next one who came howling from the tunnel. This one tried to be clever and attempted to use a sword-fighting technique old when men fought with flint weapons. He went down and the rest fled.

The woman said: 'Hai, Jikai!'

I looked at the tumbled heap of armour. 'A small *jikai*, perhaps,' I said, for that word, denoting a truly tremendous, heroic deed, seemed out of place in this cavern of blue phosphorescence and shadows and dead men. The poor devil of a Chulik had not been clever wearing full plate down here; he'd just been too slow to dodge.

She saw my glance. 'He was our champion, Nas Chendo, to whom we paid much gold to protect us.'

'Let us not,' said the full-fleshed man whose veined face still shone sweaty green, 'speak ill of the dead.' He was dressed in dark practical leathers which, to my eyes, did not suit him. He was more of your sumptuous clothes man, used to dealing in the good things in life, a Merchant Adventurer, I guessed, and the broken ends of his purse chains showed that down here his merchanting had gone as badly as his adventuring.

The second man stared fixedly at me with his round, slit eyes, yellow and bold. 'Where did you come from, *jikai*?'

Now, when you deal with sorcerors and folk of that uncanny ilk, it's best to be very wary. I knew these people were venturing into the mysteries and terrors of a Moder in search of loot and magics, and they'd know damn-well I hadn't been with them when they started. I used a facile excuse. The effect of the horror employed to guard the tombs and the treasures within a Moder is such to shred away disbelief in the strange.

'I've been wandering about down here — Havil alone knows how long — I'm very pleased to see you. Where is the rest of your party?'

For a heartbeat I thought the sorceror might not accept this explanation. His cat-face, with the arrogant whiskers and slanted, feline eyes, regarded me fixedly. He was, I saw, a Sorceror of the Cult of Almuensis, clad in splendid vestments of silk, richly decorated with gold thread. He was of the lordly ones of the shadow realms, who commanded, who wielded enormous but subtle powers. From his belt dangled gold chains. His beringed hand touched his lips and those slit eyes regarded me, saw my naked body, the

slimed sword — and this powerful man licked his lips and stumbled over what he would say.

'We have been separated — we are lost — and Nas Chendo....'

'But now we have a new champion!' The woman's voice rippled lightly in the cavern.

The man in dark leathers who had some respect for the dead spoke in a voice that would, in other circumstances, have been fruity. 'Lahal, *jikai*. This is the Lady Shamsi and this is San Ferald. I am Nath Jadrelgen ti Riptanporth.'

'Lahal. I am called Dray Prescot.'

That was enough for now. If they had heard of a Dray Prescot, whose name was heatedly over whether their chittery sounds constitute a language, and if, in consideration of their well-proven emotional attachments, they might be considered as human beings.

This russet-haired mili-milu made no sound, squatting on the white and green shoulder of the Lady Shamsi. She reached up her hand, covered in a glove very similar to the thickly padded glove a falconer wears, and stroked the hairy fellow.

Around her neck, and loosely fastened by a turquoise-headed stick-pin, she wore a red scarf. This she now unwound, replacing the pin in her tunic, and handed to me. I gave her thanks and wound the scarf around me and hauled the end up between my legs. The scarf was, unfortunately, not scarlet. The poor, dead

not unknown upon Kregen, then they would scarce think this naked stranger was one and the same. And so, I looked more closely at this Lady Shamsi.

Her appearance was surprising on a number of counts, one of which was not so much the colour of her hair, a deep and lustrous green, as why she had chosen to dye it that colour at all. Her features were regular and decided. Her face was white. One hears of white faces; her face might have come freshly from the flour bag. Inevitably, her eyes were green and the heavy eyeshadow a subtle variation of the same colour. Her mouth was red, and a white tooth showed a tip just indenting her lower lip. Some folk find that no blemish but an added attraction in a pretty woman's face. She wore a white, thigh-length tunic with a shimmery, green undersurface, and black tall-boots with tops of lizard skin, gold buckled. Her waist and arms were cinctured by gold bands.

She spoke softly from time to time to the clinging creature perched on her left shoulder, a hairy, bright-faced little monkey with great intelligence in his round puzzled eyes. Around his neck an emerald green, brass-studded collar, such as the chavniks of Hyrklana wear, was missing three of the flower-stamped, pseudo-golden studs. The chain chingled with the soft, luxurious sound of solid gold. Mili-milus, the Kregans call these friendly, monkey-like creatures, and savants argue

Chulik's armour yielded a broad belt with broken lockets — the scabbard was missing — and fastened it around me. With the thraxter in my fist, I went forward and took my place before the others as we left that cavern reeking of death.

One of these three people was the reason the Star Lords had thrown me here. One of them had to be protected. Which one? I did not know. Perhaps all three...? That made no difference. I would just have to do my best to protect them all against the eerie perils in the unplumbed depths of the Moder.

Clad only in a red breechclout and wielding a great Krozair Longsword, I, Dray Prescot, Lord of Strombar and Krozair of Zy, have fronted many dire perils on Kregen. Now, with only a thraxter to match the red scarf, I would have to do what I could. Yes, by Zim-Zair!

With the return of colour to his cheeks, Nath Jadrelgen took on some of the self-importance natural to him. He glared at the Sorceror of the Cult of Almuensis.

'Why did you not cast a spell, San Ferald? Havil knows, the situation was desperate enough.'

The sorceror was still gripped by fear. He lifted the broken ends of the chains at his belt. 'When we fell through that misbegotten trap I lost my Book....'

'As I lost my purse,' said Jadrelgen with great malignity. Then what the sorcerer was saying struck home. 'You mean you cannot cast any magics, here in this dreadful place?'

'I tried to memorise some of the various arts — but the Book — it never leaves me. It is my life — it is more than my life — '.

I said: 'We must push on if we are to rejoin your party. San Ferald, as we go perhaps you might try to recall a useful spell or two you have in your head.'

The Lady Shasmi laughed. The tiny mili-milu jumped.

The rock corridor stretched unbroken to a double door at the far end. We proceeded cautiously, probing and looking.

San Ferald said: 'I think.... Yes! I can recall exactly Sheomanar the Mad's favourite casting, *The Sleety Tomb*!'

In a shrill and near-breaking voice, the Lady Shasmi cried: 'Then you must use it now!'

Her voice broke into a babble of prayer, and her hand pointed starkly down the corridor. I stared and, for an instant, could see nothing. Then a vicious horde of winged creatures broke from the walls, buzzing, and stormed towards us.

'Fliktitors!' shrieked Jadrelgen, collapsing backwards.

Squamous, buzzing on glistening wings, with fangs and claws that would strip us to the bone, the Fliktitors swooped. Not one was larger than a Terrestrial cat. San Ferald started to declaim, grasping a sliver of crystal, and the horrors swarmed upon us, screeching, and I set myself with the single sword to do what I could against them. We would have been totally overwhelmed; but from the sorceror's outstretched finger a sleeting storm of ice spread in a glistering cone. Each barbed and fanged horror was encased. Each one fell to the rocky floor numbed and prisoned in a miniature example of Sheomanar the Mad's favourite casting — The Sleety Tomb.

We spent some time waiting to recover from that ordeal before we dared push open the double doors and step into a vast and ebon chamber. Robed in black the walls, black the throne, black the candles and black the obscene statue of a forgotten god. The massed candles threw an oddly mellow light upon that scene and upon the two ebony doors past the throne. The eyes of the statue glittered and seemed to watch our movements.

'Why was I persuaded to venture into this awful place?' Jadrelgen's voice quivered.

'You came as did we all, to gain magic and treasure and plunder the tombs,' said the Lady Shamsi. She smiled graciously upon

the sorceror. 'You did well to remember your spell, San Ferald. No doubt you will recall more for us?'

'I do not think so, my lady. All that is in my head is a childish exercise — '.

'No matter.' She interrupted brusquely. Her gloved hand stroked the mili-milu, who crouched down, his chain chiming. 'We must go on. Which door, do you think?'

It was all one to me. Jadrelgen, face now as green as before, with the veins pulsing blue, said uneasily to me: 'I don't like the look of that statue's eyes.'

'If we do not touch anything and go carefully,' I told him, 'we should regain the safety of your main party.'

'That Havil-forsaken trap! It snatched away my cross-bow as well as my purse. Look!' He showed me the ring on the little finger of his right hand. A cut sapphire, it was engraved with the representation of an archer. 'This ring gives me the accuracy to hit nine times out of ten.'

'Very useful — if you had a bow.' I was looking at the woman. As she spoke her almost continual prayers in a low and barely audible voice, so she stroked the mili-milu with the heavy glove. Most folk like to stroke these friendly creatures, to rub their noses in the sweet-smelling hair, to caress them. She had her face turned away, staring at the statue.

'If,' said Ferald, the Fristle sorceror, 'that thing comes to life, I can do nothing!'

'But you said you remembered another spell!' The Lady Shamsi sounded alarmed, her green eyes slanting upon the cat-man.

'Yes, my lady — a trifle of foolishness learned when very young, a baby spell —'.

The ebon statue, ten foot tall, seized a double-bitted axe and jumped for us. His eyes blazed. All the horror of this unholy place concentrated in those glaring eyes.

I leaped forward. 'Leave him to me!'

Do not think I was vainglorious, or wishing to prove my manhood before these people. I was in deathly terror lest the Star Lords banish me back to Earth. Also, I was stupid, as always.

We fought. Axe against sword, around and around that ebon chamber with the tall unflickering candle flames and drapes black as midnight, we battled. Far above us the twin Suns of Scorpio, Zim and Genodras, sent down their mingled streaming radiance, and down here we faced the horrors from the tomb. In the end I cut the statue to pieces, and sundered him in black fragments upon the floor. Blue smoke puffed from the splintered pieces. The Lady Shamsi clapped her hands together, white flesh and solid glove, calling again, 'Jikai!'

The others all jabbered in frenzied relief; the little mili-milu remained silent, crouched upon the lady's shoulder.

Around her neck a fine gold chain hung down, its ends vanishing under her tunic between her breasts. Beginning her prayers once more she pulled up the chain. I caught a single glimpse of a round white object and then she clasped this in her bare hand. She no longer stroked the mili-milu.

'The left door, I think,' said Jadrelgen, swallowing.

'The right, surely?' said the sorceror.

A stunning crash swung us about and destroyed any problems of which door. The entire throne smashed to the floor and from the black and cavernous opening revealed, a shrieking horde of skeletons burst upon us.

There are many forms of Kaotim, or Undead, on Kregen, and these were not the skeletons of Homo Sapiens. I recognised them from the lean viciousness and the snarling reptilian jaws, the vindictive speed of their attack, their very blasphamous possession of vigorous life in forms that should be dead and buried. They were Schrepims, incredibly fast and deadly, inordinately difficult to kill. And I must slay them all a second time!

My sword blurred into action, slashing and hacking, for to thrust was useless. Swords and axes swirled about me. I fought. Oh yes, Dray Prescot, rogue and emperor, can at least fight!

Now, I have been called an *onker*, stupid, more times than I can recall. And I own to trying to see the best in people until I am proved wrong. I began to see the pattern, and to add up what I should have added up long since. **This** was why the Star Lords had despatched me here. The trap through which these people had fallen had sundered all their chains — purse, Book, sword — but what of the Lady Shamsi's chains? And who stroked a friendly little mili-milu wearing a heavy gauntlet? And lizard-skin around the tops of boots — were they then lined in reptile scales? I had not seen the Fliktitors until after she had called in alarm. Perhaps the most damning piece of evidence was the relief with which she had given me the red scarf....

As I fought and slashed I bellowed. 'San Ferald! Use your spell! Now and quickly, before it is too late.'

'But it is only a silly....'

'**Cast it!**'

The reptilian skeletons pressed on and I chopped them. San Ferald took a bright red ring from his pocket and began to chant.

The Lady Shamsi laughed, a shrill, triumphant scream. Her white face now quite clearly showed green traces where the whiteness of cosmetics was wearing away. And I battled. By Vox! I fought!

Jadrelgen, limp with fear, stood close to the sorceror as Ferald chanted. He held the red ring aloft, and he pointed with his

right hand at the skeletons of the reptile men. I shrieked.

'No, no! At the woman! At Shamsi!'

He was well into his chant now. I simply roared at Jadrelgen, putting all that devilish cutting command into my yell.

'Jadrelgen! Swing him around, pivot him! At the lady!'

As a farmer swings a scarecrow, so Jadrelgen swung Ferald. The pointing finger aimed at Shamsi — the spell climaxed in babbled confusion — and all the Skeleton Reptile-men vanished.

My sword slashed at thin air.

'It will last only a moment!' screamed Ferald. 'It is weak, and she is strong, strong!'

The Lady Shamsi stood with her left thumb in her mouth. She made sounds like: 'Coo. Glug.'

'It is for soothing babies to sleep....'

Before any of us could move, a hairy motion on her left shoulder drew our rapt attention. The little mili-milu simply took the turquoise-headed stick pin from her tunic and drove it deeply into her eye.

Long before she fell to the floor, her clothes, her flesh, her scales, sloughed away. A Skeleton Reptile-woman, she sprawled, a mere scattering of yellowed bones.

'She was sent by the Moder Master to betray us,' Jadrelgen said afterwards, as we fought our way back. 'You shout mighty loud, Dray Prescot.'

We struggled higher into the next zone, and then, thankfully, we could hear the voices of the main party, and lights bloomed a welcoming rose and gold along the rocky walls.

'Sink me!' I said. I stroked the mili-milu. I'd taken off his collar and chains and thrown them down upon the green-dyed wig and pile of yellowed bones. His thraldom to the reptile sorceress had ended. 'I wouldn't have had to shout so loud if I'd had my wits about me from the first. By the Black Chunkrah, no!'

But, I think, and to my shame I confess, it was the sight of my face as I fought and commanded, that old devilish Dray Prescot face, that so galvanised Nath Jadrelgen into action.

Of one thing I was very sure. I'd have to be excruciatingly careful how I explained my foolishness and how the little mili-milu had joined us, when I got home and told it all to my own bewitching Delia.

Alan Burt Akers

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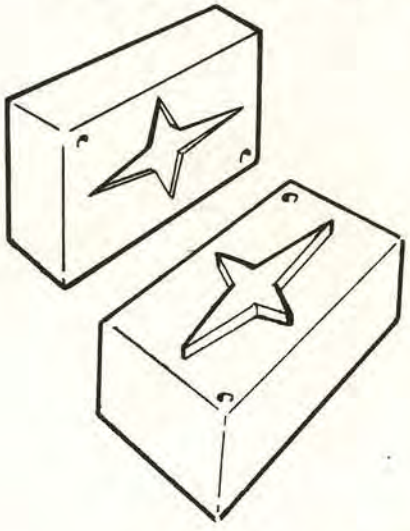

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ILLUMINATIONS

Another game.... another title

Scott Bizar of Fantasy Games Unlimited has very kindly provided us with a comprehensive list of their upcoming releases.

About now we can expect to see a new edition of **Swords & Sorcerers**, the **Chivalry & Sorcery** sourcebook. Contents will be similar to the first edition. FGU have thoughtfully provided a new full colour cover so that you can identify this latest version instantly. Continuing the tradition of highly explicit titles for **Daredevils** adventures the next book of Daredevils adventures is called **Daredevils Adventures 2; Featuring Deadly Coins** (the previous book was called **Daredevils Adventures: Featuring Deadly Coins**. The first person who correctly predicts the title of the third book will win a copy of the Daredevils adventures book of their choice. Answers to Doug Cowie c/o IMAGINE™ magazine).

Dd Adv 2 contains two complete adventures, one of which is the sequel to the Deadly Coins caper in book 1. There is also a new rules section for adding Ninja to Daredevils games.

MERC: Supplement 1 is another title that leaves little room for doubt. It provides additional rules and skills for the game of contemporary mercenary and Special Forces operations.

Champions move stable

Games Workshop's September Newsletter lists **Champions** along with all its supplements as 'out of print and unavailable'. Happily, the national sadness caused by this news was short-lived. On September 2nd, John Wesley-Smith of Flying Buffalo GB telephoned to say that they have become the sole UK agents for Hero Games, who make Champions, and they were expecting a consignment at any moment. FBGB will also have the new supplement **Deathstroke** (£4.50). The prices remain unaltered for the time being but FBGB plan to commence printing Champions in the UK, so prices may come down. Other Hero products include **Espionage** (£10.95), an RPG comprising rules, a CIA game and a 3-part adventure. **Border Crossing** is an Espionage adventure at £3.95. Both products are compatible with the Flying Buffalo game **Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes**. Furthermore, with a bit of effort, you can use them in conjunction with **Tunnels & Trolls**.

The same distributors are also handling Centurion Games' **Silo 14** (£6.95). This is a solo board game which sees the player attempting to save the world from a mad scientist who has chosen a missile silo to have one of his funny turns in. **Alien Adventure**, at £12.95, is a board game of space ship battles for 2+ players.

*IMAGINE magazine is grateful to **Doug Cowie** for his assistance with these items.*

Traveller Supplements

GDW have some new items for the **Traveller** game. **Supplement 12: Forms and Charts** certainly makes a change from the more typical 'Blood Beast of the Slave Planet' type of title. Would-be role-playing bureaucrats will need to pay £2.95 for this, as they will for the pleasure of owning **Supplement 13: Veterans**. There's a new adventure, number 9: **Nomads of the World Ocean** and the first boxed Traveller module **Tarsus** — £8.95. Another compendium of Traveller's Journal articles, **Best of the Journal, vol 3** is out at £2.95

New Standard

The Chaosium have announced a superhero RPG, **Superworld**, which they claim will 'set new standards' for this genre. It also sets new standards for price, being £18.95 in the UK. For **Call of Cthulhu**, Chaosium have released a book of scenarios called **Asylum** at £7.95.

Most Wanted

Several items are scheduled for a late autumn/early winter release. **Most Wanted** is a book of NPC villains for **Villains & Vigilantes**, the superhero RPG. Also expected is the second part of the **Aftermath** adventure **Operation Morpheus**. No title had been decided upon for this at the time of writing.

Other Suns is a new SF RPG. It's based on a more specific universe than FGU's other SF system, **Space Opera**. Complexity will be less than Space Opera (it could hardly be greater) but FGU say Other Suns will be more complex and complete than its major rivals from other companies. A breathless world watches and waits.

Not content with a new SF RPG, FGU are also producing a new Fantasy RPG. This will be called **Lands of Adventure** and is designed to have 'module culture packs' — doncha just love that concept, even if you don't know what it means? What it means is that there will be a basic set of rules to which are added separate rules packages for various historical eras. The starter set comes complete with the basic rules and the necessary 'culture packs' for Medieval England and the Age of Arthur (whenever that was), and Ancient Greece.

Chivalry & Sorcery Sourcebook 1 is nearing completion in its revised edition. This will carry, amongst other things, rules for tabletop battles and sieges, updated from those which appeared in original C&S. Space Opera fans have not been forgotten. They can look forward to **Star Sector Atlas 12** which describes the Korellian Empire and **Seldon's Compendium of Starcraft 2** containing details of the warships of the Terrans, Azuriach League, Galactic People's Republic and the Mercantile League. Finally there is another new RPG called **Horseclans** which is based on a series of novels popular in the US. Our thanks to Scott Bizar for taking the trouble to provide all this information.

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Film Review

*From **Superman III** to World War III: Colin Greenland takes a look at some of the latest films and videos on the sci-fi/fantasy circuit.*

Computers — love 'em, hate 'em, you can't get away from 'em, not even by spending this month at the movies. If you do love computers, you should stay away from **Superman III** (Warner, PG), which does nothing for their public image.

The villain is actually greedy industrialist Ross Webster (Robert Vaughn having more fun than he has had since **The Man from UNCLE**), working through his puppet programmer Gus Gorman (man-of-the-movie Richard Pryor), but the device which makes Webster the latest contender for Ruler of the World is, of course, the ultimate computer, designed by Gorman on the backs of envelopes and empty fag packets. Gorman has an 'intuitive relationship' with computers and can get this one to do anything Webster's platinum-plated heart desires. If that is not enough to send you home, disgusted, to your Commodore, 'anything' includes tapping into any other computer anywhere and over-riding its programming, just like that; magic.

The movie reflects a fearful superstition about computers, and wilfully misrepresents what microcircuits can and cannot do, regardless of the fact that half of its audience surely knows better. Not even the kids — especially not the kids — will go along with that. But then who said a Superman movie had to make sense? No III, directed by Dick Lester who made No II, is a vehicle for some smart and funny one-liners, pyrotechnic SFX, preposterous heroics, and a jolly anti-heroic interlude wherein the Man of Steel is temporarily tarnished by a lump of synthetic Kryptonite.

Christopher Reeve, already splendid as both Clark Kent and Superman, gets a chance to snarl a little and does that superbly too, after putting away the best part of a bottle of Johnnie Walker (so you thought Superman never touched anything stronger than de-caffeinated coffee? Aha....).

What ultimately spoils the fun in **Superman III** is not the incoherent story or even the technophobia. It is simply overloaded — too many ideas, too many gadgets, too many stars (Pamela Stephenson is completely wasted in a part which would have been too dumb for Goldie Hawn). The wiring all comes loose at the end; an anticlimax, and a rushed one at that.

Anyone who has respect for their hardware ought to go and see **Wargames** (MGM/UA, PG). This is an intelligent speculative film about computers, with a message for every computer fan — and that goes from Pacman all the way down to the Pentagon. Though David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) accidentally does much what Gus Gorman does, using his own terminal to break into other networks, there is something creepily credible about the way he does it.

David Lightman (Matthew Broderick), a Seattle high school student, demonstrates his home computer's ability to alter Jennifer's (Ally Sheedy) school grades in **Wargames**, a United Artists presentation. All rights reserved.

He sets his own machine to ring every number in the area where the Protovision Games Co have their offices, intending to break into their computer when he locates its phone line and copy its unpublished game programs. The one he chooses happens to be called Global Thermonuclear War, a fact that gives him not a qualm until the FBI picks him up. The machine he has been playing is not Protovision's but the army's. It is known as WOPR (War Operation Plan Response, as if you couldn't guess), and there is no way to turn it off before it finishes the game.

The villain here is not the computer, or even the military. It is the human fascination for machines, and the urge to think like one, following logical routines without first questioning data. Director John Badham and writers Lawrence Lasker and Walter F Parkes underline the crucial fact that computers are not superhumanly smart, they are inhumanly stupid, and it is our responsibility to handle them with conscience and care. Wargames is a tense, tight film, sharply acted, funny, sane, and with a plot twist for every chilling sub-routine in WOPR's scenarios for World War III.

Now you can unplug your computer and plug in your video recorder. As Carolinus the wizard reminds us, 'Your motors must not crowd out all magic,' so PolyGram whistles up the cartoon **The Flight of Dragons**, imagination being 'the most potent of all magic'. A representative from the twentieth century is summoned back to the Age of Magic to help Carolinus and his cabalistic colleagues make a reservation for themselves, insulated from the encroaching Age of Science. The lucky man is Peter Dickinson, who just happens to have written the novel from which the video is taken. Just to complicate things even more, he is shown in the video playing a fantasy board-game based on his novel....

Then the game becomes real, and Dickinson, in the body of a dragon, joins the quest for the all-powerful Red Crown. Directly aimed at fantasy gamers, The Flight of Dragons is unsophisticated to say the least, but the Japanese animation includes some nice shimmering effects; and if, like Dickinson's, your best character is a dragon, then this is for you.

Colin Greenland

*Now turn to the special **Flight of Dragons** prize competition on page 37!*

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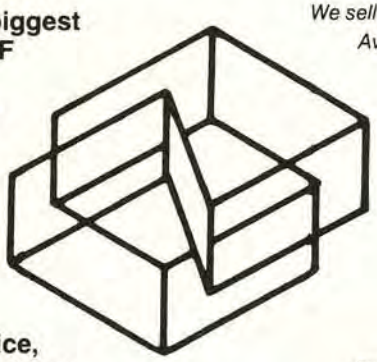

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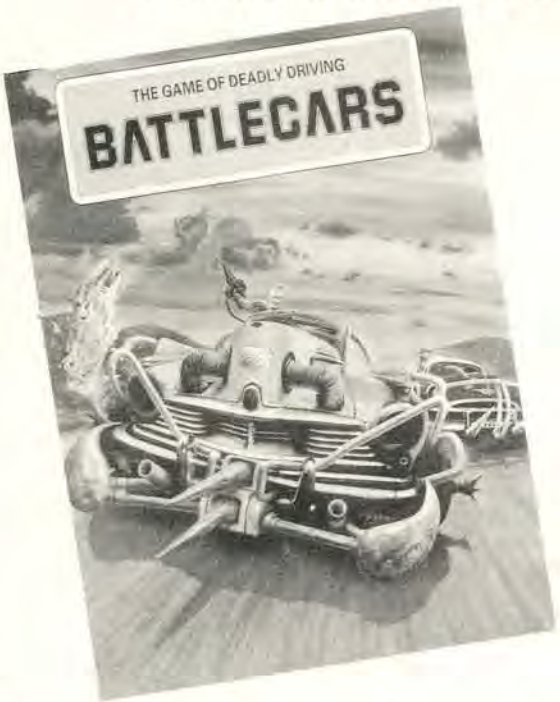

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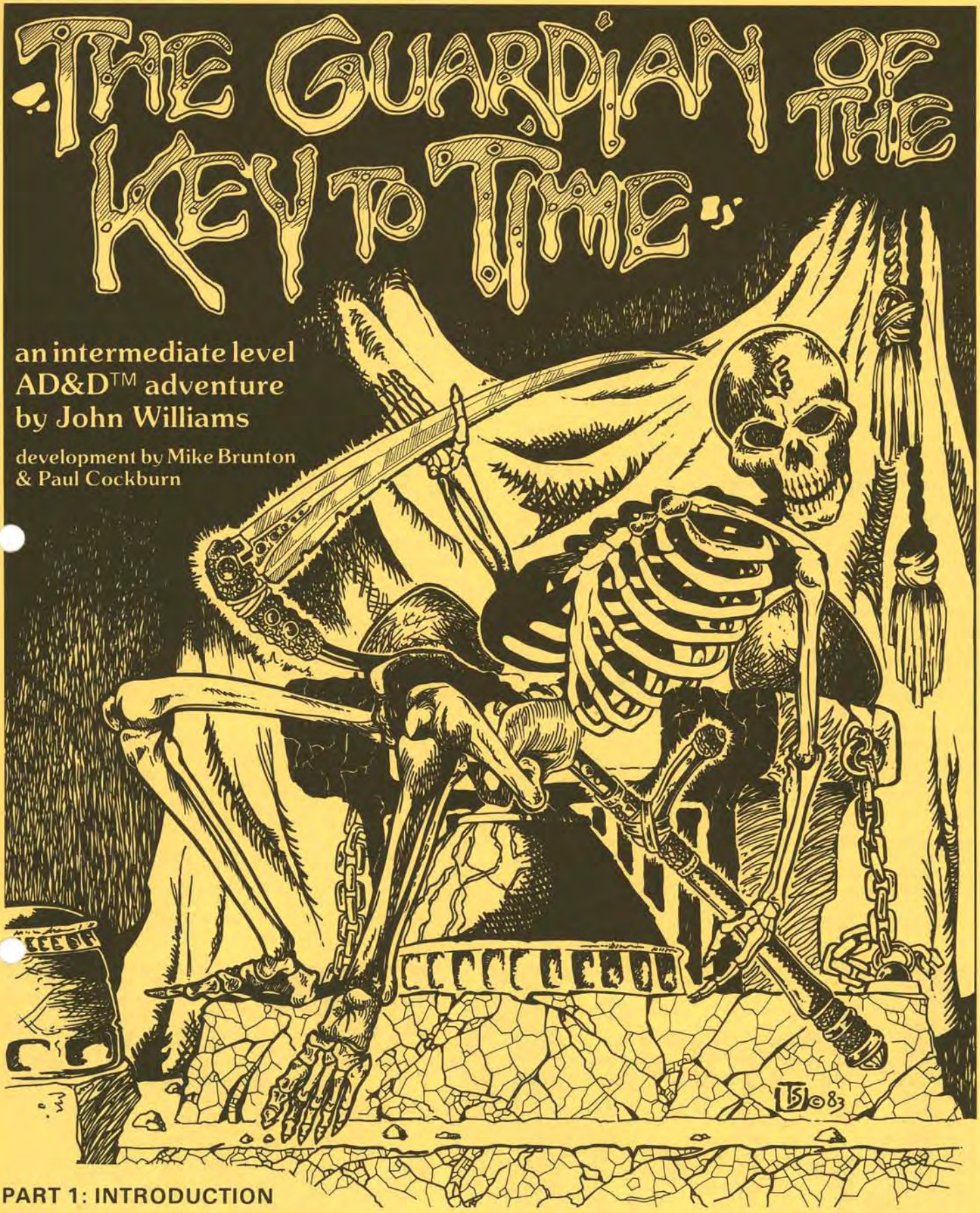
THE GUARDIAN OF THE KEY TO TIME

an intermediate level AD&D™ adventure by John Williams

development by Mike Brunton & Paul Cockburn



PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is an intermediate level mini-module which is for use with the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules. It is designed to be used with a party of 4-7 characters of levels 3-6. The party should include a wide range of character types to deal with the problems presented in the adventure.

If you plan to play in this mini-module please stop reading here. The rest of the information is for the Dungeon Master (DM) only. Knowledge of the details of the adventure will spoil the game for all concerned.

Throughout the mini-module descriptions of monsters and their statistics have been standardised. The information given in brackets after the first mention of the monster's name and the abbreviations used, are as follows:

Armour Class (AC); Movement Rate (MV); Hit Dice (HD) or Class/Level; hit points (hp); Number of Attacks (# AT); Damage caused by attacks (D); any other notes eg Special Attacks (SA), Special Defences (SD); experience points (xp); Alignment (AL); Size (S).

The Guardian of the Key to Time is divided into three sections:

Part 1 (this section) is an introduction to the mini-module.

Part 2 is the adventure and encounter key for the wilderness area surrounding Auquhol's Mansion which has been subject to the side-effects of the disaster described in Part 1.

Part 3 is the detailed encounter key for the 'dungeon' located beneath the Mansion.

Two maps are provided. One shows the wilderness area of the adventure and the location of the Mansion, the other details the 'dungeon'.

DM's Background

Six months ago Auquhol, the Wizard-Legate of Tuifyrdi, returned to his mansion to begin a series of experiments. He had travelled the known world and visited other planes of existence in search of the key constituents to a series of experiments that he had long been planning.

Auquhol was growing old, and death from old age terrified him. He had long ago determined that all means of prolonging his existence by altering his own body would eventually fail, leaving him to die as any other man. Auquhol therefore arrived at a solution as bold and daring as it was foolhardy and misguided — if he could not alter his passage through Time, he would alter Time relative to himself.

In his researches Auqhol discovered that centuries earlier another Wizard, Leynun, had been working on a similar project, the local manipulation of Time. Leynun had created a device which he grandly called the Key to Time, intending to use it as the central focus of his final experiment. Before he could do so he died, and the Key was broken up and its parts scattered.

Auquhol returned to his library to seek for evidence of the Key's continued existence, and after long months among his tomes believed that he had found where several parts of the Key could be found. Securing his home against intruders, Auquhol set out into the worlds of men to seek the Key. After ten years of travelling, bargaining and outright theft, Auquhol had obtained four parts of the Key. He returned to his mansion and began to prepare the experiment which he had planned for so long. Three months passed, spent planning and gathering minor materials for the experiments, and then Auquhol began his spell casting.

One Autumn evening, when the first series of experiments were completed, the mansion and the surrounding area were shaken by a huge, soundless explosion. The last experiment had gone entirely wrong, the Key parts had caused a feedback effect which had run wild. Auquhol and his mansion had been caught in a massive timeblast, which killed him, and blew the mansion slightly off the Prime Material Plane.

This was not the only major effect of the blast. The entire region around the mansion suffered — it is now sealed off from the rest of the world inside its own moment of Time. Outsiders can stumble in, and do so from time to time, but once inside they are trapped in a twilight limbo, which is gradually running down into an ice age.

General Notes

The DM should make sure that all the characters who take part in this adventure have had their physiological ages rolled up for them by the players. The adventure is heavily concerned with Time and effects, and some manipulation of character ages does take place within the 'dungeon' section of the adventure.

Players' Background

Ideally, the players should be introduced to this adventure without any prior knowledge of what is about to happen to them. The exact method that the DM should use to do this is largely up to the individual's discretion, but the following introduction is offered as an example.

The party has been hired by the Council of Elders of a small town to transport a wedding gift to their liege-lord who is being married during the harvest festival celebrations — in another town some distance to the south. The wedding gift is a valuable jewelled amulet of superb workmanship (worth 4500gp) and a matching smaller brooch (worth 2500gp) in the shape of the liege-lord's heraldic arms.

For this service the adventurers are to be paid the sum of 500gp each when they return from the wedding bearing the greetings of the lord. The Elders also agree to supply them with a guide, who will show them the quickest and most discreet route to the wedding.

During the course of their journey, which should take several, uneventful days, party and guide make good progress. However, the weather takes a seasonal turn for the worse, with autumnal mists and rainstorms. The party's guide wanders off course during a rainstorm as night is falling, and then manages to get himself killed when his horse falls down a mudslide.

The DM should then allow the party to find a rough trail which leads southwards, straight into the area affected by Auquhol's disastrous experiments. Once the party is within the area the DM should gradually introduce the elements of the landscape — the cold, the odd light, the leafless trees etc — until the party realises that something odd has occurred. The DM can then introduce an incongruous note by telling them that the terrain they are passing through looks familiar. If the adventurers continue to head southwards (even though they are stuck inside the area) the DM should allow somebody to find an item which could only have come from one of the party — a dagger dropped in the middle of the track, a stirrup or spur from a character. Once they realise that they are within some kind of 'zone' the DM should use his discretion as to what element of the mystery to introduce next.

PART 2: THE MANSION AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

General Notes

As a result of Auquhol's experiment, the region surrounding the remains of the mansion is largely cut off from the outside world. It is still possible to enter the area, but once inside, the local time distortion prevents anyone — or anything — leaving. Exiting the area appears possible, but is in fact impossible. Anyone attempting to do so will rapidly realise that as they walk away from the mansion in one direction they begin to approach it from the opposite direction. For example, a group which walked away from the mansion in a south westerly direction would find themselves approaching the mansion from the north east after a five mile walk.

The entire area has ceased to have a regular day/night cycle. At all times the region is in a grey twilight, without any apparent light source in the sky. The light source is all that remains of the sunlight that was falling upon the area when the accident happened. However, for those who are trapped within the area time appears to be passing at its normal rate — creatures still require sleep, magic-users and clerics can regain spells when the correct amount of subjective time has been spent in rest, etc.

The general climatic conditions within the area are markedly different from those outside. The area has been cut off from the major source of heat, sunlight, for two months. The heat retained by the ground and vegetation keeps the region from freezing completely, but this source of heat is gradually dissipating and the area is growing colder. The lake and river have frozen, and mist and fog have become permanent features of the weather. The area is too small to generate any real weather systems, such as rain or snow storms, but the constant cooling effect and the fogs ensure that, unless precautions are taken, everything becomes damp very quickly, eg bow strings will become useless in under three subjective hours.

Spell casting is affected by the temporal disturbances in the area. All spells dealing with prediction of the future (eg **predict weather**), summoning or conjuration of creatures (eg **monster summoning**), travel to, or contact with, other planes of existence (eg **phase door**), or weather control (eg **call lightning**) will not work or have a strictly limited effect bounded by the edge of the area. A **teleport** spell, for example, will not work if used in an attempt to move out of the area. The DM should use his or her discretion as to the exact limits of magic use within the area.

The Inhabitants of the Area

Before Auquhol's departure in search of the Key, parts the lands around the mansion were properly managed. The woodlands were carefully husbanded and kept free of vermin and major predators, the river and lakes were well stocked with fish, and the pasture lands were lush and verdant.

With Auquhol gone this management ended. Many creatures migrated into the area from the surrounding bleaker lands in search of easier pickings. The woods became the abode of predators, the lake was over-fished, and the pastures fell into disuse. The lake overflowed its banks, turning much of the pasture land into marsh, providing cover for even more unsavoury creatures. After the timeblast killed Auquhol and sealed off the area, many of the creatures that had moved in could not survive the increasing cold. Some, however, did survive, generally the strongest and toughest specimens. These creatures, along with the other unfortunates who have stumbled into the area since the disaster, now roam a twilight world in a constant search for food and shelter.

The DM may use any or all of the following encounters. Most are not tied to a specific geographical location and may be used at any point within the area. Some, in particular the mud-men, will only be encountered at one specific point.

1. **Six dire wolves** (AC 6; MV 18"; HD 3+3; hp 24, 23, 20(x2), 19(x2); # AT 1; D 2-8; xp 156, 152, 140(x2), 136(x2); AL N; S M) with **four wolves** (AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 20, 18, 17, 14; # AT 1; D 2-5; xp 95, 89, 86, 77; AL N; S S). These are the remnants of one of the packs caught within the area when the spell went wrong. They always act as though hungry, even when they have just fed, and are at the top of the food hierarchy. They may be encountered anywhere within the area.

2. **1-4 needlemen** (AC 6; MV 9"; HD 3+4; hp 28, 26, 25, 24, 23, 20, 18; # AT 1-6; D 1-2; SA Surprise; xp 169, 163, 160, 157, 154, 145, 139; AL N; S M). Statistics for seven of these creatures are given, because seven still exist in the area, but no more than four will ever be encountered in one place. Generally, if left alone, the needlemen will not attack anything except elves, whom they attack on sight. They may be encountered anywhere in the woodlands around the mansion.

3. **A meazel** (AC 8; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 27; # AT 2; D 1-4/1-4; xp 193; AL CE; S M), which has made its lair upon the island in the lake. Constantly searching for food, the meazel will only be in its lair 10% of the time. The rest of the time it will be using its natural thieving abilities of the 4th level of experience to sneak around and attack victims from behind with a strangling cord. Success with this attack indicates that the cord has been wrapped around the victim's neck. Victims will die from strangulation in two melee rounds unless they manage to break free, or the meazel is forced to relinquish its hold.

The meazel's treasure is stored in its island lair, intermixed with the bones of past victims. It consists of 143gp, three gold human teeth (worth 5gp each), a bloodstone (100gp), a zircon (200gp), a dagger with an amber pommel (120gp), a suit of waterlogged chainmail (50gp), a quiver containing three **arrows+3**, and a flask containing a **potion of extra-healing** (three doses).

The meazel may be encountered almost anywhere within the area, but it prefers to remain within half a mile of marshy ground.

4. **2-12 deer** (AC 8; MV 21"; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; # AT nil; D nil; xp nil; AL N; S S). The DM may choose to have several groups of deer in the area, using the same statistics for each group, and have more groups stumble into the area at times. The deer are the primary food source for most of the other inhabitants. They may be encountered at any point within the area, except the lake and its island.

5. **Three harpies** (AC 7; MV 6"/15"; HD 3; hp 19, 17, 12; +AT 3; D 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA singing & charm; xp 202, 196, 181; AL CE; S M) who prey upon the other creatures of the area, even attacking the wolves when they are hungry enough. The 19hp individual is armed with a **shortsword +1** (no special abilities). Harpies can emit sweet sounding calls. All those who hear these calls will proceed towards the harpies unless they save vs magic. Any creature touched by a harpy should also save vs magic or suffer the effects of a **charm** spell. The harpies carry little personal treasure. The 17hp one has a small vial of expensive perfume (worth 150gp) around her neck, and the third one wears a ring set with a small ruby (worth 200gp) on one of her claws. They may be encountered anywhere in the area, except in open countryside.

6. **Five mud-men** (AC 10; MV 3"; HD 2; hp 16, 14, 13, 10, 5; # AT nil; D nil; SA mud throwing; SD need magical weapons to hit, immune to certain spells; xp 60, 56, 54, 48, 38; AL N; S S) have arisen in the overflow from Auquhol's workshop. They are formed where enchanted waters collect and evaporate, concentrating the dweomer in the resulting mud.

Physically they are animated mud, and spend most of their time in a dormant state beneath the surface of a mud pool (in this state they are immune to all but spell attacks), and only rouse themselves if anyone enters their pool. It takes them one melee round to do so, and once like this they are vulnerable to attacks by magical weapons as well. They cannot sense opponents beyond their pool.

Mud-men attack by hurling mud (maximum range 6") at their opponents, who are considered to be AC 10 (modified by dexterity) when determining hits. The mud hardens on impact and slows the movement of the victim by 1" per hit. Once the mud-men are within 1" of an opponent they hurl themselves rather than a blob. A hit kills the mud-man but slows the victim's movement by 4". A miss means the mud-man must spend the next round reforming.

Once a victim's movement rate is zero or below he is unable to move or wipe the mud away, and begins to suffocate, taking 1-8 points of damage per round until his mouth and/or nose are cleared. The victim will die from suffocation in five rounds unless rescued. Hardened mud can be broken away from partially or wholly immobilized creatures, restoring 1" of movement rate per five rounds.

Mud-men are only affected by spells which cause physical damage, and by **dispel magic** and **dig** (as though by a **fireball**) and **transmute mud to rock** (which kills all mud-men it is able to affect — no saving throw). They are immune to poisoning. When dormant, damage caused by spells which do not have an area of effect (eg **magic missile**) is divided among them (dropping fractions) because the substance of their bodies is spread throughout the pool.

Once all their opponents have left their pool or been killed, the mud-men will sink back into the ooze from which they came.

Further details of the mud-men will be available in **Monster Manual II**, which will be on sale soon.

Topography

The three important features of the landscape are located in the middle of the area. They are described below in numbered sections. The other notes given here are intended as guidelines for the DM.

All the natural features of the area are starting to show the effects of the lack of warmth and light. The grasslands and pastures around the mansion are yellowing and dying, and the trees throughout the woodlands have shed their leaves. Little cover or food remains for the creatures who live there. The marsh plants have also lost their leaves, and most of the marsh has frozen solid, providing a reasonable surface for travelling across (no penalties will accrue for moving in marshy areas). The lake and river have likewise frozen solid, and are firm enough to be walked on without any danger of falling through.

1. The Mansion Overflow

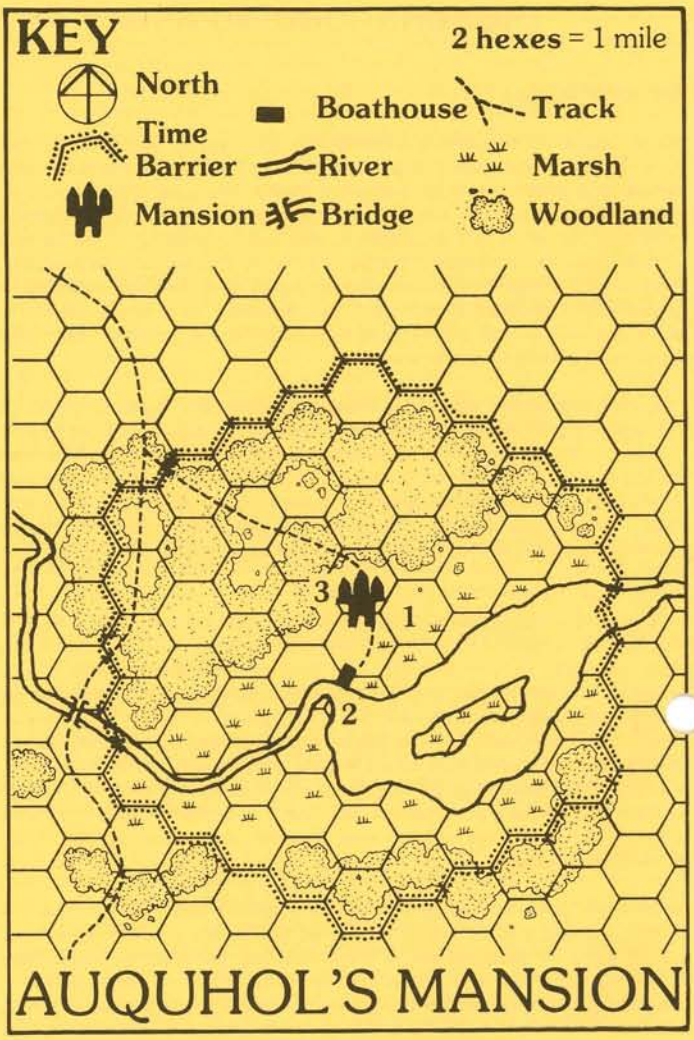
Only one stretch of water remains unfrozen, between the mansion and the lake. This is the abode of the mud-men (see **The Inhabitants of the Area**). This part of the marsh lies directly in the path of the overflow from Auquhol's laboratory. Although the waters and other detritus which flowed from the laboratory were not 'magical', they did have an aura of magic about them. Over the course of Auquhol's experiments the dweomer built up in this region of the marsh, causing the mud-men to form and preventing it from freezing when the disaster struck.

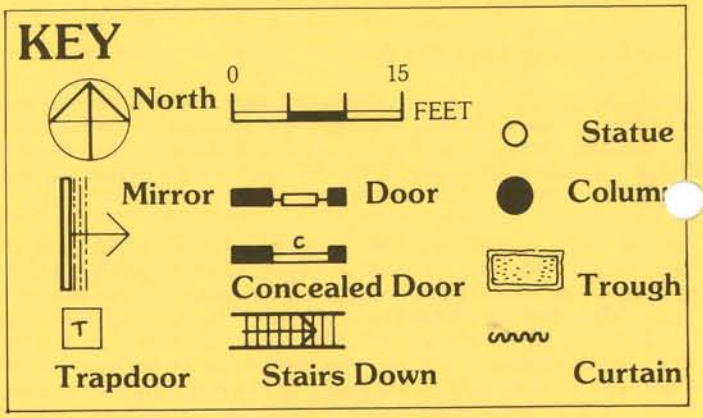
Hidden in the mud are the remains of the mud-men's past victims. Among the bones of wolves, a harpy and a deer, are the remains of a dwarf and an elf. The dwarf's body wears a suit of **plate mail +1** (dwarf sized), and carries a shortsword with gold inlay and a silver scabbard (worth 225gp). The elf carries a **longbow +1**, which has warped out of shape and must have the attention of a master bowyer for 1 month before it is usable again, and has 3 gems in his belt pouch: a carnelian (150gp), a topaz (200gp) and an opal (400gp).

2. The Boat House

Auquhol's boat house is a simple, wooden building, some 35 feet long, 20 feet wide and 12 feet high, set on the lakeshore and projecting into the water. The boat house has two entrances. At the end of the building set in the lake are two large doors, which are now frozen into the ice in a half open position. A single door stands ajar in the centre of the northern wall. A rough track, now overgrown, leads to the mansion.

Inside, the building does not have a floor, merely a catwalk which runs around a central mooring pool for boats. Tied to mooring posts in this pool are three, semi-rotten rowing boats. All are frozen into the ice of the lake. On top of one of the mooring posts is a leather helmet. The body of its owner lies in the bottom of one of the rowing boats.

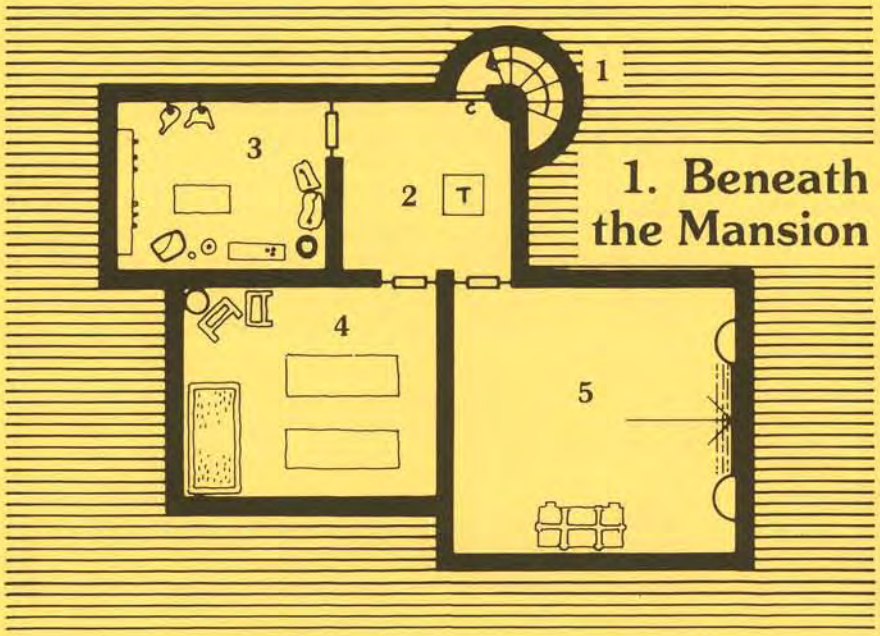




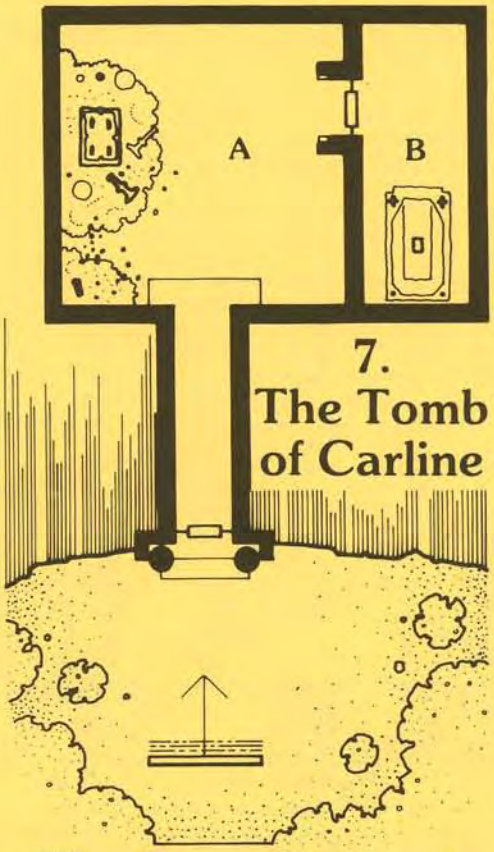
The body is that of a young woman, dressed in clerical garb over a suit of chainmail. The equipment on the body has suffered because of the damp and cold, but the armour and **shield +1** are still usable, as is the mace. In the woman's backpack are iron rations (now stale), a full wineskin (still drinkable), rope, a set of ceremonial robes (including a medallion worth 200gp), a blanket and a scroll case. Inside the scroll case are three scrolls. The first has the spells **cure disease**, **neutralize poison** and **glyph of warding** upon it. The second is a **scroll of protection from undead (shadows)**. The third bears a cryptic little verse:

> The withered finger points the trail,
> To places where all ventures fail.
> And on four planes you'll pass your way,
> Regret the way you came this day.

This verse relates to the image of Auquhol's body that the party may find in the ruins (see below), and the route down into the 'dungeon' which they may take in search of an escape route out of the area.

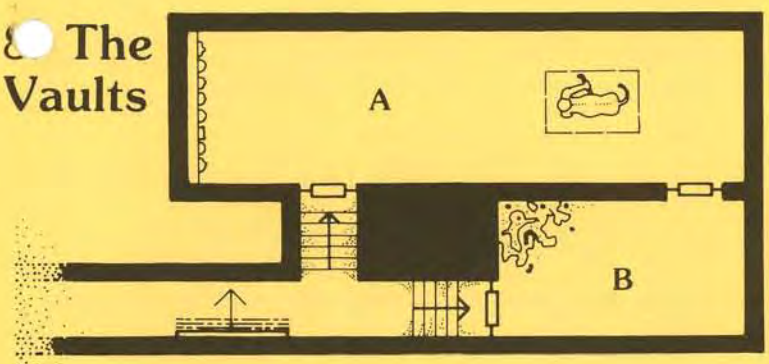


1. Beneath the Mansion

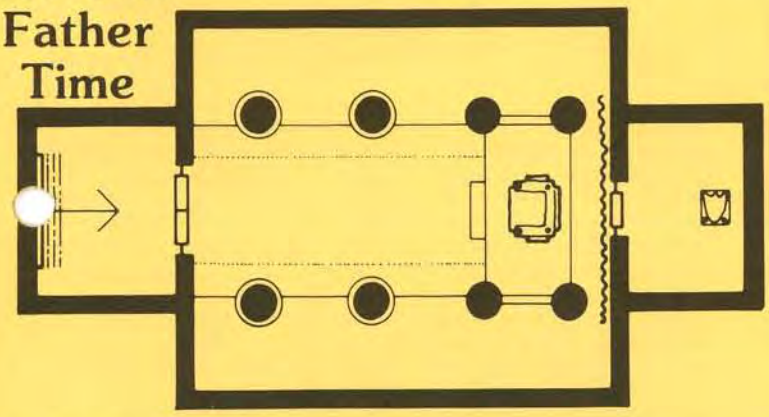


7. The Tomb of Carline

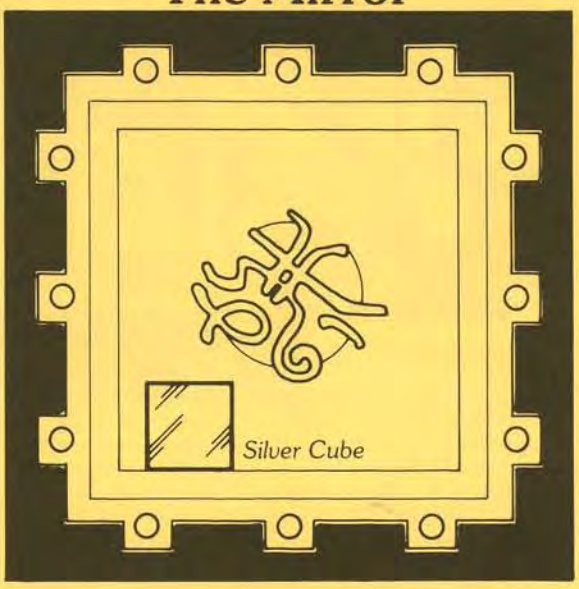
8. The Vaults



10. Old Father Time



11. The Room Beyond The Mirror



3. The Ruins of the Mansion

The remains of the mansion are the strangest element of the area. The mansion has been removed from the Prime Material Plane by the timeblast which killed Auquhol. It has not been moved entirely to another Plane, but now rests in its own inaccessible pocket of space.

However, a shadow of the mansion is still visible on the air where it used to stand, a kind of three-dimensional, insubstantial memory. The building itself appears to be intact, but this is not the case. Physically little remains of the mansion, merely the broken remnants of the stones which formed the base of the walls, now curiously fused and melted down. Above these ruins floats an image of the mansion as it was before the timeblast. This intangible piece of elegant architecture is constructed in fine white stone with discreet, coloured brickwork. The walls and other features of this image can be passed through by any object or person, although anyone who does so will feel a deep chill at the time. Inside the outlines of the building the furnishings are also insubstantial images, although richly appointed.

Once the party is inside the mansion it is safe from attack by any of the area's inhabitants (eg the wolves or the harpies). The creatures within the area are extremely wary of the unnatural characteristics of the mansion.

If the adventurers search the 'ground floor' of the mansion they will eventually find an image of the body of an ancient, withered magic-user, wounded unto death by some terrible explosion.

This is the body of Auquhol, who suffered the same fate as the mansion — being blown off the Prime Material Plane by the timeblast. He did not die immediately from his wounds and the shock of the blast, but managed to crawl a short way towards his underground laboratory entrance in an attempt to reach help. His right hand is outstretched towards the image of a trapdoor set in the floor, below which is a flight of spiral stairs leading down into the 'dungeon' beneath the mansion.

This ends the first part of the adventure.

PART 3: BENEATH THE MANSION

The 'dungeon' part of the adventure is divided into two sections — the 'real' cellar beneath the mansion, which Auquhol used as a laboratory, and a region of space and time which have become impressed with Auquhol's memories. This is a side-effect of the individual Key parts acting upon the mind of Auquhol. The memories which have been saved are those of the circumstances under which Auquhol obtained each one of the Key parts.

Experience point awards and the acquisition of treasure are handled in a non-standard manner in this part of the adventure. All treasure, magical items and experience points that characters gain in PART 2: **The Mansion and the Surrounding Area** and in the first section of the 'dungeon' may be kept at the end of the adventure. Once the adventurers have entered Auquhol's memories they will continue to gain treasure and magical items, but these will disappear when the party emerges. They are not the actual treasure and magical items, merely the memory of them. Within Auquhol's memories the magical items and practical items of treasure will function as normal. Any experience points earned from the memory encounters will, however, be permanent gains, as the characters learn from what they encounter.

Any characters who die (from any cause) while the party is within Auquhol's memories may not be permanently dead. There is a chance that they will return to life once the party is no longer within the memory region. The chance of any individual returning to life is the equivalent to the System Shock survival percentage (**Players Handbook**, p12, Constitution Table).

The DM may wish to extend this adventure by allowing characters to search for the real world locations that Auquhol's memories show. It is left to the DM's discretion whether or not to place these encounters within his campaign, and to assign a value to the Key parts which would be obtained by characters visiting these locations.

The Dungeon Key

1. The Stairwell
Beneath the image of the trapdoor, a 5' wide spiral staircase disappears into the darkness. The steps and walls are covered with patches of a slimy, black goo. The black slime is harmless and any heat kills it immediately, but it is extremely slippery. The steps are also covered with a light frost, so that any character has a chance of (40 — Dexterity)% of falling down the stairs, taking 1-4 points of damage as they do so.

At the bottom of the stairs there is a small, bare area. A locked, concealed door exists in the south wall. Ice has formed in the lock, so that, unless heat is applied, thieves suffer a 10% penalty when trying to pick it.

2. Hallway
As soon as a member of the party opens the door at the bottom of the stairs and steps into the room, a **magic mouth** spell is activated, and says the following in Common:

> 'Master, we have visitors. They are ungracious to come here without an invitation. You said you needed fresh bodies, so I suppose they can stay.'

Auquhol set this spell when he still spent much of his time in his cellar workrooms, to be triggered when anyone but he entered the chamber.

The room contains little of interest. Although obscured by frost, the walls, ceiling and floor are covered by a design of inlaid tiles in which the motifs of an hourglass and a sundial are endlessly repeated amid scenes of alien life, wherein strangely-dressed humanoids are seen travelling in mysterious containers. One section of these tiles lifts up to reveal a well. Any character who walks upon this section of the floor will fall through, taking 1-6 points of damage from the fall and 1-4 points of damage from falling through the now-frozen well water.

3. Storage Cellar
This was obviously a food store. Hanging from the ceilings are hams, joints of venison and beef, gamebirds, sacks of grain and vegetables, bundles of herbs and spices, and a pumpkin. In the corner of the room stands a small cask of salt. All of this food is now rather mildewed and covered in frost, but there is a 25% chance of any item being fit to eat.

Along the western wall is a winerack containing 48 bottles of wine. There is a 3 in 8 chance that any bottle will be undrinkable due to the change in temperature. Any wine that is still drinkable will be worth 30-180gp per bottle.

4. Laboratory
Auquhol used this room as a laboratory when he experimented with life extension. Since then, extra workbenches have been moved in from the Room of the Mirror (area 5), so the room is now somewhat cluttered.

The major feature of the room, partially hidden by a stack of benches, is a 4-armed statue of a male humanoid. In each hand the statue holds a bowl; in one is oil, in another ice, in a third dust, and the last is empty. If anything is placed in the bowls, or if any of the arms are interfered with independently, all four arms will animate, tipping the contents of the bowls onto the floor. A cloud of dust will arise instantly, affecting anyone immediately in front of the statue. These characters must then save vs breath or be blinded for 2-12 turns.

Only if all four arms are pulled together will a small, thief-proof compartment in the base of the plinth open, jettisoning an amber liquid from a small tube, which suppresses the irritant quality of the dust. In the compartment are several small parchments, wrapped in hide; documents obtained by Auquhol at the beginning of his researches. One shows a representation of a Key, which will enable the party to recognise the objects when found (encounters 7, 8, 9, and 10). Another parchment has a list, showing the locations of the Keys thus:

1st Key	**The Tomb of Carline**
2nd Key	**The Vaults Beneath the Capitol Museum**
3rd Key	**The Village of Children**
4th Key	**Old Father Time**

If the DM intends to have the party seek these items again in 'real' time and space, as suggested at the beginning of Part 3, he or she may allow the characters to roll percentile dice to see if they have ever heard of these places. The Capitol Museum should be well-known (20% chance per character), but Carline's Tomb and the Village of Children are more obscure places (5% chance per character). The location of Old Father Time is unknown to anyone in the party.

All the tables and benches in the laboratory are covered in alchemical equipment. Most of the bottles and flasks have dried out, but one or two still contain some foul-looking brews. On one of the tables are three flasks containing viscous-looking liquids. Two of the flasks contain **potions of longevity**, the other is a **potion of extra healing**.

Nearby lie two books and a pile of notes. The notes relate to Auquhol's researches into longevity and are worth 1000 gp to a sage specialising in human biology. The first book is a travelling spell book containing the spells **animate dead** and **magic jar**, the other is entitled 'The Lich — myth or reality?' and is worth 2500gp to a sage or magic user.

The room contains several other items of value. In one corner, hidden behind a pile of glassware, is an orrery — a mechanical device which demonstrates the movement of the Sun, Moon and other planets about the Earth — worth 750gp. On one of the tables stands a pair of hourglasses made of gold inlaid with gems (worth 200gp each).

In the southwest corner of the room stands a large, stone drainage trough, which is the source of the dweomer-laden water which has given rise to the mud-men. The bottom of the trough is filled with mud, and there is a 15% chance of a mud-man appearing if the mud is disturbed (see PART 2, **The Inhabitants of the Area** for details of the mud-men).

5. The Room of the Mirror
This was one of Auquhol's laboratories until he cleared it to make space for the room's dominant feature — a large 'mirror' which stretches along the eastern wall. The only other features of the room are a large chest against the southern wall and a pair of columns, apparently holding the mirror up, but actually **two caryatid columns** (AC 5; MV 6"; HD 22 hit points (attack as 5 HD monster); AT 1; D 2-8; SD 25% chance of any weapon breaking when used to hit the column, -5% per magical 'plus', +4 to all saving throws; 280xp; AL N; S M) which are programmed to attack anyone who attempts to strike the mirror.

The chest is locked, with a poison needle in the lock. Inside are a golden sundial inlaid with platinum wire (worth 500gp), a silver moondial inlaid with gold wire (worth 300gp), a **helm of underwater action**, a **dagger +1**, a **bowl of watery death**, and a box with a **fire trap** on it. The fire trap will do 1-4+7 points of damage if set off. Inside the box are three scrolls. The first has the spells **blink** and **gust of wind**, the second the spell **dig**, and the third the clerical spells **silence 15' radius**, **speak with dead** and **cure serious wounds**.

The mirror is more than a looking glass. It does show a reflection of any character who looks into it, but this reflection is always, to begin with, of the character as a child. Gradually the reflection changes until it appears to die of old age. Throughout the process the reflection will aways be recognisable as that of the character. At times (1 in 4 chance per turn) the mirror will show a reflection of an old man (Auquhol) in wizardly garb — the same man whose image points towards the trapdoor in the mansion above. If anyone examines the reflection they will notice that the man is carefully holding four grey bars about 6" long. Furthermore, anyone with an Intelligence of 16 or greater may be able to read his lips and make out the words 'Key to Time'.

Anyone who touches the mirror will discover that, apparently, it does not exist. The mirror is actually the gateway to Auquhol's memories, and can be walked through without visible harm, but anyone doing so will feel a wrenching sensation, and age 1-4 years.

Auquhol's Memories

6. The Elements
Once the adventurers have passed through the mirror they will not be able to see it from this side. Around them stretches a zone of white, cloud-like vapour, which obscures all vision beyond 30'.

No matter which direction the characters take, five minutes will pass while they cross this zone. Towards the end of that time the atmosphere will grow damp, and the adventurers will find themselves walking through a torrential downpour. This will also take about five minutes to walk through, regardless of which direction the party takes. The downpour will then gradually abate, and the characters will find themselves standing on a muddy plain (which will dry out as they proceed) which stretches as far as the eye can see. After a further five minutes walk the plain will take on a cracked, sunbaked appearance and the air will grow hot. As the party proceeds the air will grow even hotter and gouts of flame will appear from the cracks in the plain, which will now be seen to be made of black basalt. This region will also take five minutes to cross at a walking pace (two minutes at a running pace), and the characters should make a saving throw vs death magic or take 1-6 points of damage due to the super-heated air entering their lungs.

After the characters have crossed this basalt plain, they will find themselves entering a zone of featureless grey. After walking for five minutes in this zone they will come upon another mirror, apparently identical to the one they passed through in the mansion cellar. Passing through this mirror will not take the party back to the cellar, but to area 7 (detailed below) and age them all 1-3 years.

7. The Tomb of Carline
As the adventurers emerge from the mirror this time, they will find that it is still behind them. In front of them is a small clearing at the bottom of a cliff face. Let into the face of the cliff is a doorway. The feature of the area that the characters will most easily notice is that it tends to fade to grey nothingness as they wander further from the door, until all distinguishing features disappear.

The doorway is large and imposing, with a complex seal across the lock. Once the seal is broken, a thief will have no trouble picking the lock, which is not trapped. Behind the door, a corridor of rough-hewn stone stretches into the cliff. At its end, it widens into a chamber (A) filled with treasure, but this treasure is insubstantial and slightly grey. None of it may be removed. The only part of the room which has any reality at all is the door leading to the burial chamber (B), which is again sealed.

Breaking this seal will not alone disturb Carline, the **mummy** (AC 3; MV 6"; HD 6+3; AT 1; D 1-12; SA fear; 1406xp; AL LE; S M) who was buried in this tomb. The mummy, dressed in ragged clothes, and wearing a thin gold circlet (apparently worth 50gp) about its brow, is securely bedded in a coffin against the southern wall. The mummy will only be roused if anyone touches the inlaid wooden box (apparently worth 125gp) which rests on top of the coffin. Inside this box is a small grey rod, covered in runes (which are indecipherable even with a **read magic** spell). This is a part of the Key to Time.

There is nothing else of interest in the room, which otherwise appears slightly grey and insubstantial. Anyone passing through the mirror from this side will not be transported back to the Room of the Mirror (5) in the mansion cellar, but into the small section of Dungeon (8) detailed below. Passing through the mirror from here will age any character 2-4 years.

8. The Vaults Beneath the Capitol Museum
Again, as the adventurers step out from the mirror they will find that it still 'exists' in the wall behind them.

Towards the west, the corridor grows grey, misty and insubstantial after only 10 feet or so. To the east, the steps down to both doors are filled with webs, as though caused by the second level magic user spell.

The main room (A) has plain stonework floors, steps, walls and ceiling. It has but two features of note. The first is a **statue of a Centaur** (AC 2; MV 18"; HD 4; hp 20; AT 3 (missile) or 1 (melee); D 1-6 (arrow); or 1-4 (bow as club); xp 165; AL NG; S L), with a bow and quiver full of arrows, placed in the centre of the lower part of the room.

The second is a row of masks, male and female, in four different metals: silver, electrum, gold and platinum, hanging on the west wall. If any of these are moved or removed by the party, the Centaur will animate, firing arrows at a rate of three per round and yelling (in Centaur) 'Leave them alone — they are not for you!' He has an endless supply of arrows, and in close combat will swing his bow like a club. Near death (5hp or less) he will surrender, weeping tears if the masks are then taken.

The masks will radiate a magical aura if **detect magic** is cast but their nature cannot be identified. This can only be done through the wearing of each one. When this is done, the mask's property is discharged and it then disintegrates. The wearer's features will have subtly altered to match the features on the mask, and in addition each confers a 'gift', as follows:

Silver Male:	**+1 to Prime Requisite**
Silver Female:	**+1 to Charisma**
Electrum Male:	**-1 to Prime Requisite**
Electrum Female:	**+ d8 for extra hit points**
Gold Male:	**gain one full level**
Gold Female:	**reverse alignment (normal xp penalty)**
Platinum Male:	**receive a cursed weapon (determined randomly)**
Platinum Female:	**reverse sex**

The smaller room (B) is the abode of a **wight** (AC 5; MV 12"; HD 4+3; hp 20; AT 1; D 1-4; SA energy drain; SD need silver or magic weapons to hit; 645xp; AL LE; S M) who will attack anyone entering the room. In one corner is a pile of offal and old clothing, and it is here that the wight keeps its treasure (taken from past victims).

Apart from the clothing (worthless) and 27gp, this consists of a short sword and a grey rod covered in indecipherable runes. This is another part of the Key to Time.

Mervyn the **short sword +3** (AL LN; powers: **detect evil 1" radius**, **heal** 1/day, **cause insanity**; Languages spoken: any at DM's discretion; Int 18; Ego 19+) used to have a special purpose (hence the insanity power), but has forgotten what it was — 'What do you expect when superior workmanship is left to go rusty in a wight's lair. A wight mind you, not even a worthy undead like a lich, but a wight. No wonder I get a terrible pain in the pommel and a spot of rust on my scabbard, but I never have found anyone worthy of carrying me, hardly surprising really....'

Mervyn's powers are likewise depressed and depressing. He must be talked round to the idea of combat ('Is there really any point?') 75% of the time, otherwise he acts as a **short sword +1** without special powers. His insanity causing ability is limited to inducing suicidal mania (**DMG** p84).

Passing through the mirror from this side will age any character 1-4 years and take him or her to the next encounter area (9. The Village) detailed below.

9. The Village of Children
There is no map for this encounter, because it should not be required.

As the adventurers step through the mirror this time they are greeted with a depressing sight. Sleet is falling slowly, and threatening to put out the fires of the smouldering wooden huts that surround them. They are standing in the centre of a small village which looks as though it was raided and plundered about twelve hours ago. Most of the buildings are burnt to the ground, and the ashes are now steaming rather than burning. All the buildings, except one, have a tinge of grey unreality about them, which becomes more marked further away from the centre of the village until the forest which surrounds the village fades entirely to grey. The only building which has an air of reality is the largest one in the village, a circular hut about 25 feet across. It has not been burnt at all. Lying in the doorway is the body of a human male child dressed in rags.

Inside the building it is dark and smells of blood and smoke. Lying in the centre of the room is the body of a young female child, and kneeling over the body is another, remarkably similar, child. The second child is, however, a **doppelganger** (AC 3; MV 9"; HD 4; hp 23; # AT 1; D 1-12; SA Surprise on a 1-4; SD immune to sleep and charm, saving throws as 10th level fighter; 422xp; AL N; S M) which has just apparently slain the first child.

If the doppelganger is overcome, the body in the doorway will rise as a second, identical doppelganger, and if this in turn is defeated, then the prone child in the centre of the room will rise as a third.

In a pouch around the 'dead' child's neck is a grey rod covered in runes — another part of the Key to Time. If a **command** spell is cast at this child, and the word 'rise' is spoken before the child has become a doppelganger, then, no matter what else is happening around it, the child will rise and give the Key to the nearest character.

There is nothing else of interest in the hut.

Passing back through the mirror from here will take the party to Old Father Time (10) detailed below, and age them all 1-3 years.

10. Old Father Time
This time the characters emerge into the ante-chamber of a large throne-room. Ahead of them two great, redwood doors have been thrown back, showing the room ahead. This vast chamber seems to have been carved out of glazed chalk, so white does it seem. As the characters pass through the door, they may feel they see dancing apparitions, faint and short-lived; women and men dancing and beckoning them forward....

The room is dominated at its further end by a massive throne, of lustreless, black stone. On it is seated a **giant skeleton** (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 5; hp 30; # AT 1; D by weapon; xp 240; AL N; S L), 10 feet tall, bearing a huge silver scythe that inflicts 2-12 points of damage. The skeleton will attack anyone who enters the room. An undecipherable rune painted on its forehead prevents it from being turned by a cleric.

Behind the throne, a curtain conceals a second room of more modest dimensions, in which there is a single coffer, the lid of which has been fashioned out of a **shield +3**. The coffer is not locked and contains the fourth Key.

When the adventurers pass back through the mirror from here, they are taken to the Room of Mirrors (11, below). Passing through the mirror this time ages the characters one year.

11. The Room Beyond the Mirror
As they emerge from the mirror this time, the party finds itself in a room where each wall is made of mirrors, with endless reflections of the contents of the room. If they return through the mirror again now, they will return to the Room of the Mirror (5), and will effectively have returned to that area just as it was when they left it.

In mirrored niches along the walls, there are several stone statues, all human with the exception of one elf, and of varying classes. In the centre of the room, the marble floor is engraved with a strange cypher, giving off a sparkling aura. Any person entering the area of the cypher will be turned into stone, as the statues. By contrast, should a statue, including one formed from a member of the party, be placed in the area of the cypher, they will be returned to flesh. The human statues who have been in their niches for many decades, will instantly turn to dust, but party members and the elf would be restored to life.

The **elf** (AC 7; MV 12"; Fighter/Thief 2/2; hp 7; # AT 1; D by weapon; xp 84; AL CN; S M) will introduce himself as Sorensenn, who came to this place before Auquhol took it over. He wears **leather +1** and carries a **dagger +2**. He will be very disorientated, particularly if the party is able to prove that several decades have passed since his imprisonment commenced. His own sense of the passing of time has betrayed him. In his confusion, much of what he observed over the long years will not return to him in coherent fashion, but he has two vital pieces of information for the adventurers. First, he can tell them how to align the Keys so that they will activate, although he has no idea of their function (Auquhol rehearsed the experiment in this room). Second, he knows the location of Old Father Time, and can lead the party there.

In the corner, there is a silver block, of vast dimension, inscribed with unreadable, magical runes which are clearly in the same language as the markings on the Keys. On each side of the cube there is a single hole, and the Keys must be inserted simultaneously and turned once counter-clockwise. If a single key, or anything less than all four, is turned, then a noiseless shock wave will emanate from the block, and characters should save against death magic or take 1-10 points of shock damage. This was the mistake that Auquhol made. In a sense, the party is lucky — the fact that the block has already unleashed the full potency of its power has reduced its effect now. The shock wave will be repeated each time that the party attempts to turn any less than four keys in the cube.

As soon as this is done, every adventurer will suffer from an instant blackout. Their actions have not caused the true function of the Cube to occur, since Auquhol's experiment has so radically misshapen the nature of reality in this area, but it has undone the harm he caused. When they awake, which will be at a time scant minutes after they first entered the mansion, the party will find itself strewn about the ruins of the mansion. The illusion of the building as a whole will have vanished, and the whole of the underground level will be blasted and turned to rubble. Areas 5 and 12 will have been utterly destroyed. Sorrensenn will not be with the party.

And Finally....

The DM may now choose what was real and what merely a dream from the adventure that has taken place. If he or she does not intend to take this storyline any further, it may be best if the party is allowed to keep all the treasure it has discovered throughout the adventure and gain all the experience from combat. However, if the DM wishes to allow the party to search again for the Keys to time, the party should emerge from the mansion without any of the artifacts from the imaginary encounters (7-12), including the effects of the masks, and the encounters 7-10 should be placed within the campaign, perhaps altered in some details. The main gain for the party will then be knowledge, of the location and dangers inherent in searching for the Keys to Time, and they can then attempt to discover just what would happen if the experiment were carried out properly.... Regardless, the party should keep all the experience points gained from combat throughout the adventure, since the dangers were very real.

Of course, even if they find the Keys to Time again, there is a little matter of digging a hole fifty feet into the ground to find the Cube....

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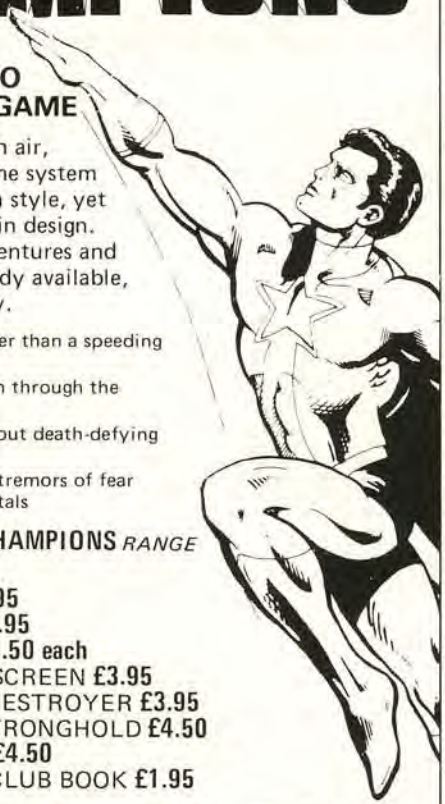

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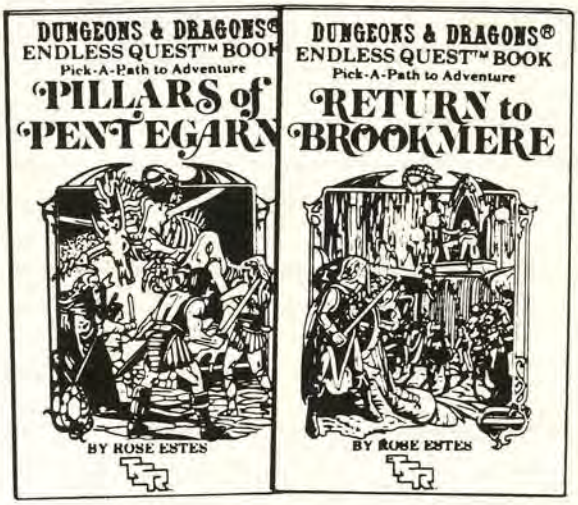

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To die for a beautiful woman is, as they say, an honourable thing. What about dying at the hands of a beautiful woman? Your humble ex-editor (now appearing in the guise of guest speaker) may be just about to find out, as he casts all sense of self-preservation to the winds and announces.... **Monster Manual II** ('Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the dungeons').

The lady to whom I refer is Jane Hughes, sales manager for this here organisation, and owner of a reputation for lynching those who promise you products before the combined rigours of the North Atlantic and HM Customs are willing to let them enter this sceptred isle.

There is at least a fighting chance that this worthy tome will be available at Games Day '83, in which case the long queue in the rain (why does it always rain?) will be worth it.

Anyway, Jane, I've said it now. I didn't actually promise anything, did I? Jane.... why are you looking at me like that?

Gone, but not forgotten

Changing the subject, may I say how touched I was by the *floods* of letters sent in *begging* me to take up the editorship of PAN once again. In fact, as far as I can tell, noone has even noticed! Anyway, I'm sure you must all be dying to know what I've been up to since the coup which toppled me from the PA. I can tell you in one word.... modules.... Lots of modules! TSR UK Ltd is becoming a veritable hive of industry on the creative front. My poor biro can't take the strain.

Following on, then, from the success of UK1, U2 and (soon) U3, which were written in the UK but typeset, illustrated and otherwise glamourised in America, we are now going all the way, and will be producing modules right up to the stage where they can be dropped into the hands of the printers — this will continue to be done in the USA for all sorts of practical reasons. This means that we can give a British colour (think about it) not only to the text but also the art and layout. This new development is due entirely to the existence of IMAGINE™ magazine, whose staff are not only producing the magazine these days, but are also providing the technical wizardry and skills which turn 30,000 words (or thereabouts) into a module — no mean feat when they are 30,000 of my words.

The arrival of Sir Galahad

So, with the magazine coming along like a juggernaut every month, fitting the modules in is like playing **Frogger** without the pretty graphics. Incidentally, TSR have recently ensnared Phil Gallagher (remember the job ad?), whose task it is to make sure that things happen in the right order, at the right time (he also beats me at Frogger, but that's another story). Phil has brought considerable talents into the department (some would say 'about time, too'), not the least of which is a new sense of chivalry. Who offers the typists his jacket on a raw day? I'm sure he would have made a much better impression if he hadn't complained then about being cold himself....

I digress. Once we get plugged into the printing schedules, each year should see five or six UK modules in the shops. First off will come **UK2 The Sentinel** and **UK3 The Gauntlet**, which go together as a set. The word is that UK2 will be *printed* (not on sale, eh Jane?) before Christmas. When it finally comes out, I'd be very grateful if you'd tell me what you think.

Graeme Morris

DISPEL CONFUSION

Dispel Confusion is a question and answer column intended to help hobby gamers overcome problems they have had with game rules.

At present, we can in general only help with games produced by TSR; while our answers may not be completely 'official', we have contact with the designers themselves. In future, we hope to get answers from those who design other games.

For interesting answers, we first need good questions – so send your queries to: ***Players Association (Dispel Confusion), TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.***

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Can assassins assassinate monsters or are they restricted to humans alone? (Advanced)

A. Assassins are generally restricted to assassinating humans, and demi-humans such as elves or dwarves. We suggest that assassins should be allowed to attempt to kill humanoids in this manner, but with a reduced chance of success. Assassinating monsters should not be allowed.

Our reasoning behind this is simple. Assassination is the art of killing by attacking a single vital point of a creature. Assassins would have detailed knowledge of these points on a human or demi-human, and could make a reasonable stab at guessing where such points are on a humanoid creature. It is not reasonable to assume that an assassin would have a similarly detailed knowledge of monster anatomy.

Q. What is the best weapon in the AD&D™ game? (Advanced)

A. This is a matter of opinion, influenced by the intended user and circumstances of use of the weapon.

In terms of damage inflicted upon opponents then there is really only one choice of weapon for the discerning — the two-handed sword. This implement of destruction inflicts large amounts of damage with great efficiency, but it has disadvantages. It requires a large amount of empty space to swing properly and with gusto; by its very nature, it requires two hands — thus no shield can be used, causing a consequent drop in armour class; and many DMs do not have magical two-handed swords in their campaigns. For many uses, the bastard sword represents a good compromise between the two-handed sword and the longsword.

Longswords represent a good choice for those with an interest in magical weaponry, as they are the most common type of magical sword. The longsword also does a reasonable amount of damage to opponents and can be swung in a confined space without too much difficulty.

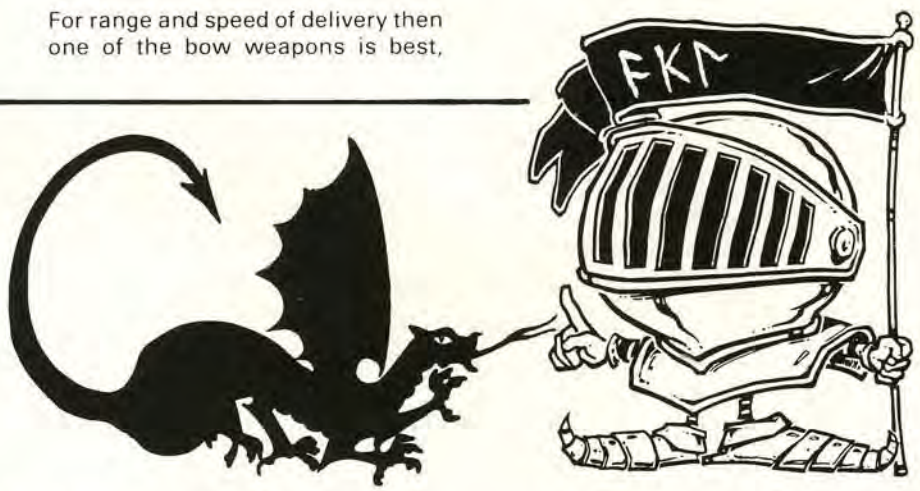
For range and speed of delivery then one of the bow weapons is best, either the composite longbow or the heavy crossbow. The choice depends upon whether fire rate or range is judged to be the more important factor.

For flexibility of use, the dagger cannot be beaten. It can be thrown, used in melee and makes an excellent backup weapon in many circumstances. Many characters — of most character classes — seem to carry at least one dagger tucked into a boot sheath or similar.

Polearms may seem an attractive weapon at first glance, particularly the ranseur and spetum which can disarm an opponent, but they are not quite as useful as they appear. The problems of carrying a 10 foot pole down an eight foot high corridor are as nothing to the problems of carrying a 10 foot pole with a blade/hook/axe arrangement on one end down an eight foot high corridor.

And finally, for the monk at least, the open hand is the best choice. It is a weapon which cannot be discovered in a search, and monks, particularly at high levels, cause truly horrendous damage with their bare hands.

Q. Is it possible for a magic user or cleric to cast two spells, use two wands or a combination of the two in one melee round the casting time/activation time of both totalled less than 10 segments? (Advanced)



TURNBULL TALKING

Over the years there has been a lot of debate about magic users in the AD&D™ game — are they too strong? Too weak? Just right? Since this is a 'magic-user' focused issue, let me add my pennyworth. As it happens, the magic-user class is my own favourite, since I think that, of the major character classes at any rate, it is the most difficult to play well.

It has always been my own view that the MU is slightly too weak at low levels, round about right at higher. The addition of cantrips will make lower-level play more interesting but I don't think they will counter the inherent weakness of the class which is to do with hit points and (most important) armour class.

Armour class, you know, is vital. My Monstermark system, published in **White Dwarf** some years ago (would anyone be interested in seeing a refined and extended version resurrected?), laboured this quite heavily and showed the truth of it in calculations. After all, the difference between 4 and 10 hit points is not much if the enemy is handing out 11 damage, whereas the difference between AC 10 and AC 2 is a massive 40% change in terms of the probability of the blow landing.

In a first level party, the MU must be protected, not because a blow from pretty well any monster would probably kill him outright, but because the chance of that blow landing is so much greater. An approximation to the reality of first-level adventuring, I know, but the basic point is still valid.

Furthermore, the chance of an MU improving his or her armour class significantly is less than that enjoyed by the other characters, I believe. I cannot see a satisfactory way of proving this conclusively, but if we assume that the rarity of magical items discovered is proportional to their xp value, a **shield +2** (500) is twice as often found as **bracers of**

A. No. A magic user or cleric may only cast one spell — or activate one wand — per round, with a single exception: magic users may cast two cantrips (see pp 6-9 of this issue of IMAGINE™ magazine) in a single round, because of their short casting times.

Q. How can a character worship more than one deity without angering one, or more, of them? (Advanced)

A. The question of whether characters can worship more than one deity in a campaign is largely up to the DM. However, all the gods worshipped should be of similar alignment and compatible with each other — a character should not be allowed to worship a nature god *and* worship a god of death and destruction at the same time.

There should also be drawbacks for the character who spreads his faith about. Resurrections would be more difficult to obtain if a character had not been a faithful believer, which worshipping more than one deity seems to imply.

Q. Is it possible for a fighter/thief to use thief abilities such as hear noise, pick pockets and climb walls without removing his armour, or does he or she have to remove all armour (except leather) before using any of these abilities? (Advanced)

A. A fighter/thief is restricted to the armour of the thief class when acting as a member of that class. Thus, a fighter/thief may only wear leather armour when attempting to use thief abilities.

DRAGONQUEST™ game

Q. What strike chance modifiers (if any) are used when a figure attempts a melee attack against a hostile figure engaged in close combat with a third figure?

A. The rules make no specific suggestion as to what modifiers apply in this case.

We suggest that the following modifiers should apply: +20 for attacking a kneeling or prone target (close combat is supposed to be grappling and rolling around with an opponent) and -10 for attacking an evading opponent (the target isn't actually evading, but is probably moving about more than normal), for a total adjustment of +10. We also suggest that if the intended target is missed then a similar attack should be conducted against the other close combat participant — it can't be very easy to distinguish targets who are wrestling against each other.

Mike Brunton, Graeme Morris & Phil 'Galahad' Gallagher

defence AC 8 (1000) and six times as often as a **ring of protection +2** (3000). It is difficult to conceive of a 6th level fighter, say, who has not gained at least magical armour and shield, while a 6th level magic user with AC 10 is not uncommon (I have an 8th level illusionist in precisely this condition).

Hit points are, of course, important; at high levels the MU is still very vulnerable. My 10th level MU Arachne has 46 hp (thank goodness for a constitution of 16!) and will probably survive an eight-dice **fireball**, but there isn't a lot of margin for damage incurred previously. A normal 10th level fighter wouldn't have the same worries. Let's not forget that a high-level party should bump into high-level enemy spell-casters; lurking in the middle of a group of high-hit-point thugs, as one does as a 1st level MU, is of no avail against **fireball, ice storm** or **flame strike**.

It is argued that the high level MU receives compensation for low hit points and whatnot in the impressive magical artillery which can be brought to bear. Certainly the strike potential is greatly enhanced, but I'm not convinced this is really compensation. I would rather have a living MU character with no spells than a dead one with a dozen **disintegrate** spells lurking in whatever was left of his/her memory. This argument is even less valid for a high level illusionist who gains less artillery than the MU. The compensation is there, I believe, but it isn't in artillery; rather, it is in the increased repertoire of *defensive* spells the MU has available. **Invisibility, minor globe, teleport** and the various **walls** are often regarded as second choices since they aren't as exciting to cast as the lethal spells; but if Arachne has her choice, that is where she looks first in her spell book.

The matter of travelling spell books is so recent that I haven't really come to any firm conclusion about them. Arachne has only just raised the necessary cash to pay for hers and she is somewhat stuck for the price of the next meal. I am inclined to think they will over-compensate the MU who can lug them all around — what think *you*?

Don Turnbull

PA MEMBERSHIP

The PA is a club for all players of role playing games, particularly the D&D® and AD&D™ games. Since it was founded in 1981, the PA has become the country's largest D&D club, and now has this 4-page section in IMAGINE™ magazine. The benefits of membership include:

* Free quarterly broadsheet featuring hobby articles and news, competitions and new product information.
* Free badge, sticker and personalised 'credit-card style' membership card.
* Special offers available only to PA members, including the 'R' series of modules and Bargain Basement — your chance to buy damaged-but-usable stock at greatly reduced prices. Fuller details of the special offers are given on page 31.
* Free postage and packing on mail orders from TSR UK Ltd for UK and BFPO members.
* Discounts on tickets for GamesFair hobby conventions.
* Listings of PA members in your area (send SAE).

Membership of the PA costs £2.50 per year for new UK or BFPO members (£2.00 for renewals) and £5.00 (or US $10) for overseas members. All you have to do is fill in this coupon and send it to:

PA Memberships, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge CB1 4AD, England

together with a cheque or postal order made payable to TSR UK Ltd.

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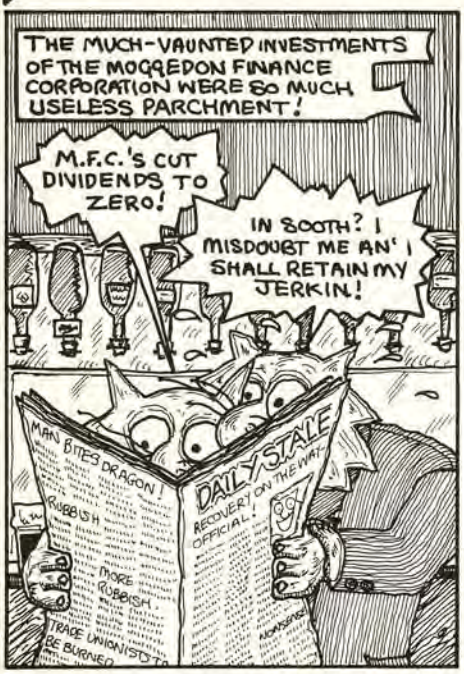
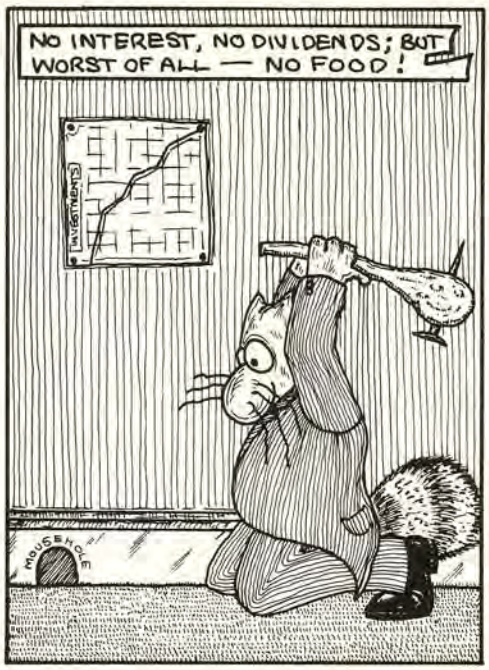
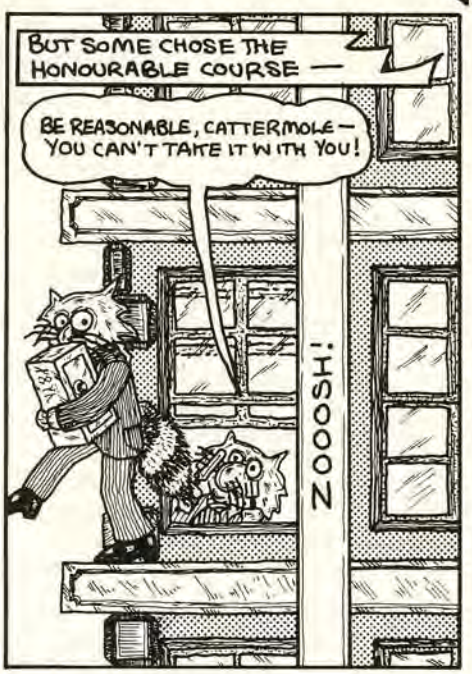

THE MUCH-VAUNTED INVESTMENTS OF THE MOGGEDON FINANCE CORPORATION WERE SO MUCH USELESS PARCHMENT!
M.F.C.'S CUT DIVIDENDS TO ZERO!
IN SOOTH? I MISDOUBT ME AN' I SHALL RETAIN MY JERKIN!
DAILY STALE
MAN BITES DRAGON!
RUBBISH
MORE RUBBISH
TRADE UNIONISTS TO BE BURNED





THEN — DISASTER!
DURING A ROUTINE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WAS EATEN BY THREE STARVING COST — MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS!

RUBIC OF MOGGEDON ©

HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE THE THIRD.

THE CATACLYSM:— AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRIES BEYOND THE SEAS RUIN AND STARVATION WALKED HAND IN HAND. ONLY THE FAIR CITY OF MOGGEDON WAS SPARED, DUE TO THE CONSTANT VIGILANCE OF THE EXCISE. FROM ITS SEA-GIRT CLIFFS THE POPULACE LOOKED OUT AND TREMBLED...

FEW ESCAPED THE CRISIS...
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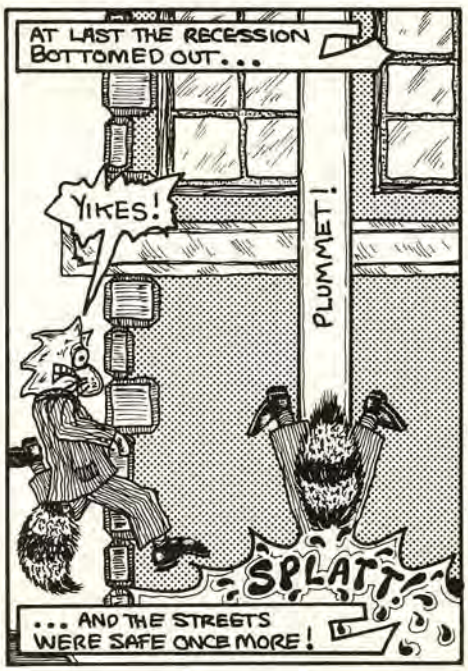
YOU'RE LOOKING ANAEMIC TO-DAY, GRAND MASTER!
VERILY! I CONJURED A HORNED DEMON LAST NIGHT. IT WAS DELICIOUS!
... OF CORDON-BLEU NECROMANCY!

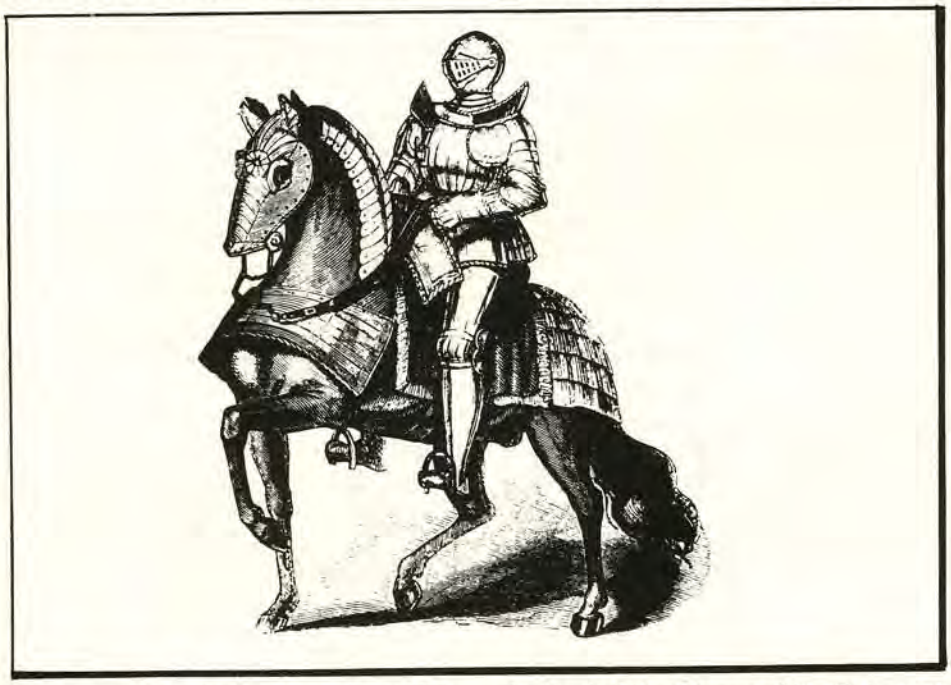


CHAIN MAIL by Brian Creese

A bi-monthly feature about the postal gaming hobby

DIPLOMACY VARIANTS

Back in IMAGINE™ magazine #6, I described the game of Diplomacy, how it is played by post and the problems involved in trying it face-to-face. You will recall that the game called for considerable amounts of cunning, intellect, stamina and deceit. Strange as it may seem, these challenges are not enough for many players, and they go on to produce more difficult versions of the game, versions we call Diplomacy Variants.



There are two basic ways in which Diplomacy variants are produced — either by keeping the rules but changing the map, or keeping the map and changing the rules. Also, despite my initial comment above, not *all* variants are more complex (just most) and many are deliberately light-hearted.

MegaMap Variants:

The most obvious change we can make to the game of Diplomacy is to increase the number of players. The initial problem is then to find space for those extra players. This is usually done by extending the map to include more of the world. In the popular 9-player variant, **Cline-9 Diplomacy**, two extra countries are included, the Barbary States and Persia, while the map goes further into Africa and Asia. The logical extension of this style of variant is **Mercator** where up to a dozen players contest a map of the world. Mercator fans often play only this variant, considering Standard Diplomacy as merely parochial! But why stick to earth for your map? If you are going to change things, what is wrong with other worlds? There have been countless variants produced on SF themes, on abstract-looking maps or the inventor's own fantasy world, but an enduring favourite is setting games in Tolkien's Middle Earth. Most popular of these is probably **Downfall of the Lord of the Rings** and the **Return of the King**, played on a map of Middle Earth by players representing Elves, Dwarves, the Men of Gondor, Sauron, Gandalf and, of course, Mordor.

The Rule Changers:

Alternatively, since there is a rather good map already in existence, why not just change the rules a bit? As an illustration, one of the simplest variants must be the **F Rome** variant where, to counteract Italy's alleged weakness, Italy starts with two fleets and an army rather than two armies and a fleet. Another fairly simple variant, very popular a few years ago, is **Stab**. In this variant you only know where opposition units are when they are involved in conflict of some type. Quite a simple concept, but a very different game.

One of the truly great variants must be **Vain Rats**, a game of Standard Diplomacy played on a standard map but where each player has a 'special power'. These vary, but include the Grey Wizard who can have foreknowledge of any country's orders, the Evil Eye who can order one other person's unit and the Illusionist who can swap over two provinces for a turn. With Vain Rats (an anagram of Variants, as I'm sure all RPGers will have already noted), we are in the area of silly variants, and, with all due modesty, I feel that I should mention that I am the only person ever to have successfully GMd a complete game of **Rather Silly Diplomacy**. This is a game where the regular seven countries are augmented by several extra players, including the Doctor who uses his Tardis to get around in and the Mastermind who gains units by setting general knowledge questions. There are also special units such as Monstores, things which fall out of the sky and attack Supply Centres and the Borg, a horrible thing which eats units! Oh, and then there are female armies and homosexual fleets, and Birds.... Complex? Oh yes, but very, very silly.

It is a tribute to the type of person who plays games by post that they are not content simply to play the games on offer. Every variant of Diplomacy is an imaginative lead, an attempt to evolve a better or different type of game. No-one knows how many variants there are (certainly thousands), the majority of which have never been played (and never will be). Yet hidden away in these ideas are some excellent games, even if they may need some sorting out. In an attempt to collate information on variants, a central 'Variants Bank' has been set up to which people can write and find out about the variants on offer, or indeed, receive the rules of a specific variant.

The playing of variants is a huge hobby in its own right; at present over twenty 'zines are running thirty different variants which represents only a small fraction of those available. So if someone asks you if you are interested in a little Diplomacy, don't forget to ask if they mean the regular kind or something with a little extra spice in it!

Brian Creese

*Brian Creese is the editor of **NMR**, a **Diplomacy / Railway Rivals** 'zine. Those interested in getting involved with postal gaming should note that several play-by-mail 'zines are reviewed in our fanzine department on page 38.*

CRASIMOFF'S WORLD

POSTAL GAME

Crasimoff's World is a fantasy game of exploration and adventure. As a player you assume the role of chieftain in a band of brave adventurers set on gaining knowledge and power. You must create a party of nine fellow travellers, from three character classes (fighter, mage and priest) to assist your chieftain.

Your party will set out from a small town, knowing nothing about the world apart from a few rumours. As you travel you will learn more about the land and its secrets, encountering other parties, races and creatures. There are tokens detailing magic items, spells, creatures, gods, money and many more things that you will discover later in the game.

'KJC Games has been running Crasimoff's World for over a year now, and the effort the gamesmaster puts into each turn never ceases to amaze me. Most players find themselves offered a different scenario each turn, or find that a new twist has happened to an existing adventure.'

as reviewed in

WHITE DWARF Nº37

If you wish to enrol in Crasimoff's world send a £5 cheque/P.O. payable to K.J.C. Games. For this you will receive a rulebook, set up material, and the first four rounds. Future rounds are £1.25 each. Copies of the White Dwarf review are available free of charge from K.J.C. Games.

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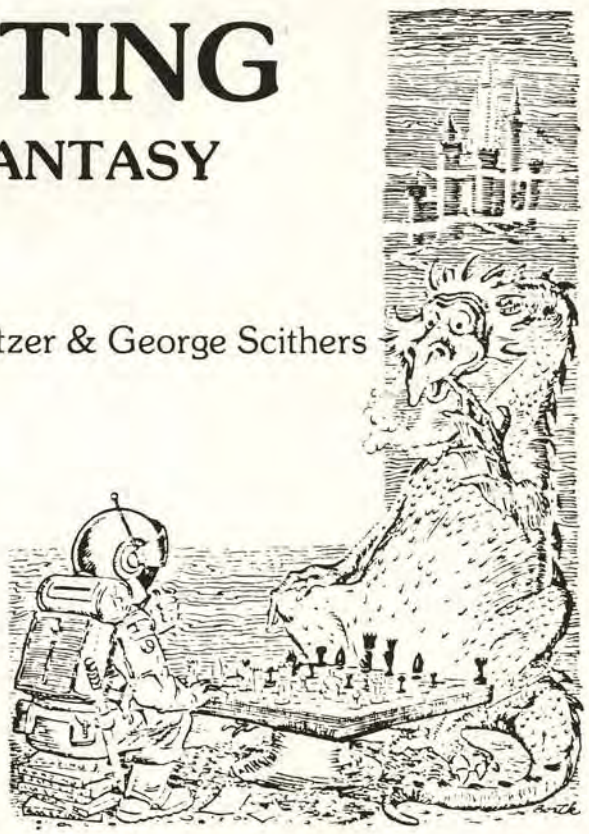
CONSTRUCTING

SCIENTIFICTION & FANTASY

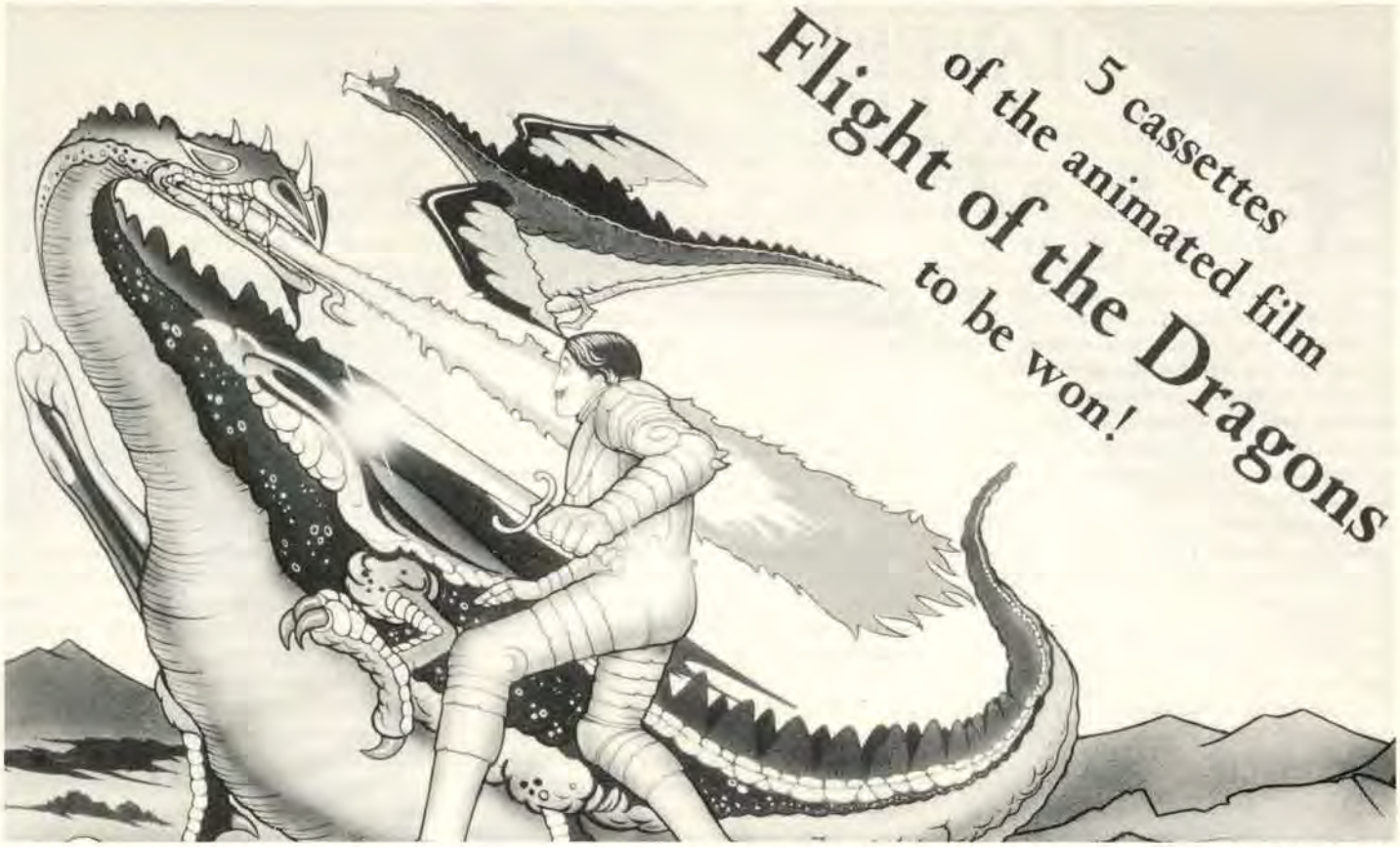
by John Asmead, Darrell Schweitzer & George Scithers



If you have ever wanted to write for this or any other magazine, this booklet, published in the USA by TSR Inc, will be invaluable.

Containing hints on everything from the first draft to the final article, this 32 page booklet is being offered for the first time in this country *only* through TSR UK Ltd.

So if you ever wondered how it was done, or if you just want to know what Scientifiction is, write off to us now! This offer is made at the modest price of 75p plus a stamped, self-addressed, A5 envelope direct from us at T'Mill.



It has been a considerable time since we last visited the citizens of T'mill, that famed city of puzzlers. Well, you'll be glad to hear that things have improved quite a lot. Not only have they found lasting fame through these pages, but they are now rich enough to be able to offer a prize to those able to discover the answers to their two devious brain teasers.

The people behind the film, **The Flight of the Dragons**, which you will find reviewed on page 19, have donated 5 cassettes (worth about £40 each) of this two-hour animated film, based on the book by Peter Dickinson, and featuring the voices of Victor Buono, James Gregory, James Earl Jones, Harry Morgan and John Ritter.

The first five correct entries out of the hat will receive the cassettes, while 25 runners-up will each get a 'Flight of the Dragons' badge!

Entries should be sent to:

Illusionary Script, IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD

and should arrive no later than December 1st. Results will be announced in # 11 of IMAGINE magazine (February 1984) and the winners will be notified by post. The decision of the publisher will be final.

So, journey with our guide, the enigmatic Gordius, to T'mill, and see how many of the answers you can find.

Throngard, Isabel and Piff the thief quaffed their ale, boasting about last night's adventure.

'I'm surprised Klystra kept going', said Piff, 'it was less an adventure than a trek. We did nothing but walk from the Jolly Miller in Burle to the top of a nearby hill and back again. Six hours of walking, not counting one or two diversions, and all for little adventure or treasure.'

Gruff the landlord was drawn to their conversation, curious, as ever.

'Just where is this hill; is it a big one?'

'Big enough,' said Isabel, testily, 'but we kept up a steady pace, three miles an hour up hill, and four miles an hour on the flat.'

'And we came down the hill twice as fast as we went up!' laughed Piff. 'Good going, I'll wager.'

'Very good,' agreed Isabel, 'and speaking of wagers, it strikes me that we've already told Gruff enough for him to be able to tell just how far the top of the hill is from the Jolly Miller. What do you say, landlord? 50gp says you can't tell us, aye, and 50 more says you can't tell us what time we arrived at the hilltop, within half an hour. You will recall that we left at 6am.'

'You're on!' cried Gruff, unable to believe that such a wager could be offered him. Within a moment, he had won his bet and relieved the unhappy trio of their loot.

What was his answer?

Gruff was 100gp richer, and in excellent mood. Even so, he was not prepared to waive the bill that Piff, Isabel, Throngard and Klystra (who had arrived late, as always) had run up.

'I feel ill,' muttered Piff, and well he should, for he admitted to having consumed 10 tankards of ale, four portions of pie and a wedge of cheese.

'17 gold pieces, cut-purse,' beamed Gruff, and none of those coins you tried to pay me with last time.'

Piff began to delve into a deep pocket.

Klystra was not of dainty appetite herself. She had eaten three pieces of pie, a wedge of cheese and downed seven tankards of the heady ale. Gruff took her payment of 14 gold pieces with a ready leer....

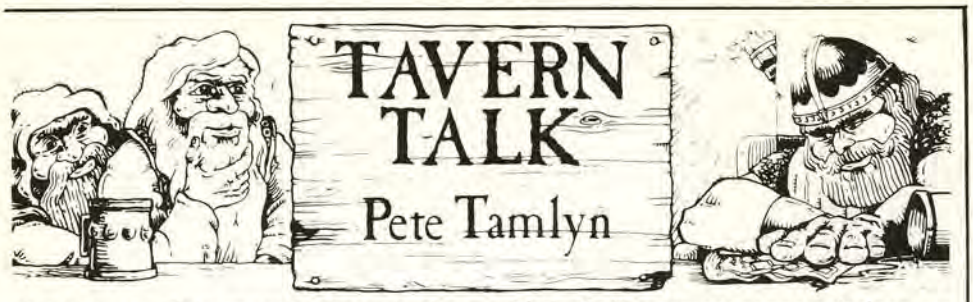
'And what of me, master landlord,' interrupted chaste Isabel, 'I had but one tankard of ale, a piece of your delicious pie and a wedge of cheese....'

Throngard admitted, rubbing his bulky midriff, that he had managed three pieces of pie, and two wedges of cheese, washed down with five tankards of the ale. Gruff grinned widely.

'It seems that it would be but a sporting gesture to allow you to win back a small part of what you have lost. Tell me, since you know how much the bill was for our light-fingered friend and the lovely lady mage, can you then tell me what I would charge the cleric and our fat warrior here?'

It was a worthy challenge. Gruff said that if they could tell him this, he would charge them nothing for their repast, and within the hour, Isabel had done just that.

So, how much was the total bill for the party?



Hello there. This month, through the miracles of modern technology, IMAGINE™ magazine's outside broadcast unit brings you Tavern Talk on location in the wilds of Scotland. There's dedication for you; who else would still produce his column whilst on honeymoon? Of course, this does mean that I am currently rather out of touch with developments in the big, wide world (it took enough effort just to find out what was happening in the Test Match) but I'm sure I can find something to write about. And so, with warmest thanks to John and Kitty MacIntyre for the loan of the typewriter, on with the column....

One thing that I was determined to do whilst here was to interview one of Scotland's more well known personalities, a character who has not inconsiderable links with FRP. It took some getting, I assure you, but after many trials and tribulations I finally managed to talk to the Loch Ness Monster.

'Tell me, Nessie, as one of the best known monsters in Britain today, what is your opinion of the new craze for monster hunting as typified by the DUNGEON & DRAGONS® game?'

'Well tae be honest wi ye, Jimmy, Ah think it is a doonright disgrace.'

This sounded to me rather like a fake accent put on for the benefit of tourists, but it does at least show that one person reads The Sword of Alabron so I've tried to transcribe it accurately.

'I can understand that, Nessie. Several dragons I know have complained about an increase in petty pilfering from their hoards and a group of kobolds is currently trying to sue Gary Gygax under the race relations act. Then again, the trolls are quite happy to have their nastyness of character reasserted after some adverse publicity from soft toy manufacturers. Do you suffer from any persecution?'

'Ah noo, Ah'm a protected species ye knoo. Tha Tourist Board couldna bear tae loose me. 'Tis the familiarity Ah canna stand. In tha old days Ah could surface in front o'some wee bairn an' skeer him out o' his skin. Nowadays all they do is ask how many hit points Ah've got.'

Well, so much for the effect of FRP on the world's monster population. But thanks to the wonderfully reliable Richard Walkerdine I have acquired a copy of the 'Zine Poll results so perhaps we'd better get back to the news.

First of all, warmest congratulations are due to Pete Birks whose **Greatest Hits** has won the Poll for an amazing fourth time in five years. This is all the more remarkable since GH has been going through a bad patch lately due to Pete's duplicator breaking down. You won't find any mention of FRP in GH, but then you won't find mention of many other games either! GH is one of those rare fanzines which has broken away from its origins and now survives on the strength of its editor's personality and writing skill. I gave it my top vote — I can't say better than that.

Second in the Poll was Richard Walkerdine's **Mad Policy**. Some people will doubtless think it unfair of Richard to enter a contest that he runs, but MP is well worth its high placing. It has come second so many times that Richard must now despair of ever winning. IMAGINE magazine's columnists also did well with **Acolyte** third and Brian Creese's **NMR!** fourth. Last year's winner, **Ode**, dropped to seventh, which was not really surprising as John Marsden's enthusiasm seems to have been rather low of late.

As I've explained before, few FRP 'zines were eligible for the Poll as they do not run games. You will find some RPG material in Acolyte, in **Denver Glont** (which was 5th), and possibly **Lokasenna** (9th), but the only purist FRP 'zine which was eligible was **Dragonlords**. This was 14th — a bit of a comedown for the current Games Day Award winner, but looking carefully at the statistics that Richard provides with the results I would guess that this was due largely to a lack of votes from subscribers, as opposed to other editors. Most DL subscribers would have been unable to vote as they receive only one eligible 'zine. Interestingly, the position taken by DL is similar to that attained by Acolyte a few years ago when FRP was still frowned upon by the hobby at large. Once there are a few more FRP 'zines eligible and other editors have had time to adjust to the presence of such material, then DL should be up at the top.

Finally, a word of congratulation to Simon Billenness whose **2OYO** attained a well-deserved 10th place and received more votes of 10 out of 10 than any other 'zine. This is a fitting tribute to the excellent publicity work that Simon has done for the hobby since he took over the 'zine. Anyone wanting any information on any 'zine mentioned above should get a copy of 2OYO from Simon: 35p; 20 Winifred Road, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR3 3JA.

Pete Tamlyn

Fanzines

From the letters I've received, it's clear that a number of zine editors are amazed at the paucity of reviews of RPG-based fanzines, particularly compared to the coverage of the postal gaming zines. Alas, it does seem that there is a genuine shortage of good RPG zines, at least in terms of those I receive. If there are other zines out there, remember, just send your publication through, and it will get a highly subjective mention in this space.

It's even more of a pity that the editors of the two most successful RPG zines appear to be involved in some kind of feud. **Dragonlords 18** continues the fight in its editorial; for those who still haven't seen it, this is probably the best zine of its kind, with a review of Dragonmeet — the picture of yours truly being virtually unrecognisable — an Advanced scenario, letters, reviews, and, as a recent addition, postal gaming. While this issue did give the low-down on Mike Lewis's sell-out to WD, it did not include Ian Marsh's attempted sell-out to TSR. Watch this space!

The other side of the feud was a brief mention in **SEWARS 14** of an earlier DL review of SW.... SEWARS appeals to a different type of fan, with a spell point system, magic items, scenario, news and reviews, but you'd think these 'zines were in deadly competition. The sniping between them is a little ridiculous.

The newer RPG zines show promise. **Miser's Hoard 3** & **4** contained articles on alignment, scenarios for the D&D® and *Traveller* games, a solo adventure, a *Runequest* rules variation on Cult Entry.... In short, plenty of inspirational material. Each issue is better than the last.

Tales From Tanelorn 2 & **3** continue the tradition of scruffy layout, typos and other goofs that is becoming almost legendary. It has a style all of its own. Postal gaming, reviews, and Moorcockiana dominate; though it can be trite, I've got to confess, I like it.

Tempestuous Orifice 3 had articles on *Call of Cthulhu*, religion in the AD&D™ game, and weather. This is pretty good reading, and, again, each issue is better than the one before.

Brand new is **Rapscallion 1**, in which *Call of Cthulhu*, photography, a *Judge Dredd* postal game, and very good artwork make up the mix.

I hope all three of these zines are able to keep going; I've just heard that the excellent **Swordplay** has folded after only two issues. They will too, if they don't get support, so give them a try, and then let me know what you thought.

Onto the postal gaming zines, and there are plenty of them again. Zine Poll victor Pete Birks keeps the Post Office in business in **Greatest Hits 110**. This is *the* debating forum for the hobby. Nearly, but not quite, as large, is the mailbag in **Acolyte 50**. This issue Pete Tamlyn brought the zine out in three pieces (the letters being one section), since his two-part approach was being copied elsewhere.

Diplomacy and *Empires of the Middle Ages* are the mainstays of **Zine To Be Believed 16**, with an interesting RPG article thrown in. **Putty Riffo 37** runs *Diplomacy* and something called *Ratadan*, though there were no openings at the time of this issue. Some interesting ideas on rock music too.

Apologies to Mike Sharpe; I meant to look at **Panzerkreuse 12** last time, but mislaid it. This is a zine many people rave about, for games of *Diplomacy*, *United* and *Golf*. There was also an eloquent piece on the cost of producing a zine — a loss of £15 an issue in Pk's case! Potential editors beware.

Dave Thorby is pretty sore with me apparently, for the way I've described his zine in the past. Still, **Walamalaysia Gazette 34** actually had some reading matter. It should be noted that many who know better than me say this is one of the finest (and cheapest!) places to play *Diplomacy*. Likewise, **Mad Policy 88** (this issue was produced by a substitute; rumour has it that Walkerdine has cracked up after producing the Zine Poll), where *Diplomacy*, *Formula 1* and *Finchley Central* abound.

It took me a while to realise I'd got **NMR! 42**. *Diplomacy* and *Railway Rivals* exist behind the camouflage cover and the pub guide. The same games are also to be found in **Perspiring Dreams 36** & **37**. There was also a good article on Europe as it actually was from 1880 onwards. **Take That You Fiend 11** has *En Garde* and *Title Bout*. I think Kevin and John may have been unhappy about their Zine Poll place (26th)....

The coverage of computer simulation gaming in **War Machine 21** is, as ever, comprehensive. **Wargame News 9** does the same for board wargaming. Both zines offer a comprehensive review service within their subject areas.

Ansible 34 provides the inside news on what's going on in the SF world, while the **British Fantasy Newsletter Vol 10, no 6** did the same for its readership. Both are recommended for their insight.

Reviews by Paul Cockburn

Dragonlords, Mike Lewis, Rushcommon House, Dorchester Crescent, Abingdon, OXON OX14 2AJ (55p); **SEWARS**, Chris Baylis, 12 The Fryth, Basildon, Essex (60p); **Miser's Hoard**, John McKeown, 22 Hall Lane, Upminster, ESSEX RM14 1AF (50p); **Tales From Tanelorn**, Matt Williams, 15a Redland Park, Bristol BS6 6TH (50p); **Tempestuous Orifice**, Patrick Fama, 15 York Close, Morden, SURREY (55p); **Rapscallion**, Steve Norledge, 75 Hawkhurst Way, W. Wickham, KENT BR4 9PE (35p).

Greatest Hits, Pete Birks, 39 Handforth Road, LONDON SW9 0LL (£2.50 for 5); **Acolyte**, Pete Tamlyn, 2 Poplar Road, The Coppice, Aylesbury, BUCKS HP22 5BN; **Zine To Be Believed**, Nick Kinzett, 11 Daleway Road, Green Lane, COVENTRY CV3 6JF; **Putty Riffo**, Rob Chapman, 7 Baymount, Paignton, DEVON TQ3 2LD (35p); **Panzerkreuse**, Mike Sharpe, 'Sandy Brae', Stoneleigh Road, Blackdown, Leamington Spa, WARWICKS CV32 6QR (50p); **Walamalaysia Gazette**, Dave Thorby, 200 Lavender Hill, Enfield, MIDDLESEX EN2 8NJ.

Mad Policy, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, SURREY GU2 6PG; **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Park Road, Kingston upon Thames, SURREY KT2 6LG (45p); **Perspiring Dreams**, John Dodds, Moberly Towers, Burlington Street, MANCHESTER 15; **Take That You Fiend**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Avenue, Hornchurch, ESSEX RM11 1JG (30p).

Wargame News and **War Machine**, Mike Costello, 17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU (65p & £1.15); **Ansible**, Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, BERKSHIRE RG1 5AU (£2 for 7); **British Fantasy Newsletter**, Stephen Jones, British Fantasy Society, 130 Park View, Wembley, MIDDX HA9 6JU (50p).

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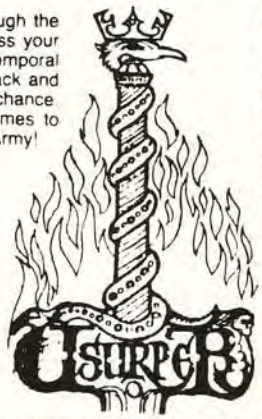

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Game Reviews

WARHAMMER

Warhammer announces itself as 'The mass combat fantasy role-playing game'; perhaps a more accurate description would be, 'the mass combat *and* fantasy role-playing game'.

If tempted to buy, behind the excellent cover-art you will find the volumes totalling just over 120 pages.

Volume One, **Tabletop Battles**, consists of the rules for combat, a fairly standard set of monsters described in game terms and a quick scenario which is little more than a straight fight to get you used to the rules. Combat itself consists of an order of strike, determined by initiative level, a throw to hit on a d6, and if successful a throw to 'kill', once again on a d6. A 'kill' actually causes one Wound point but as most standard creatures can only take one Wound point, the effect is the same! Finally, if a kill is obtained and the victim is wearing armour, it gets a saving throw against the wound, also on a d6. In fact every dice throw in the combat system (except for one in an optional rule) is done on a d6 which might seem a considerable limitation as well as a bit of a disappointment to those who love throwing lots of multi-sided dice! However, the repeated d6 rolls do produce believable results, but they are more time-consuming than, say, a single percentile dice throw, especially when large numbers of troops are involved.

Volume Two, entitled **Magic**, as you might expect introduces wizards and spells etc to the battlefield. Most of the volume is taken up with descriptions of over 50 spells plus a further 9 available only to those evil wizards specialising in Necromancy. Every time a spell is cast, the wizard suffers a temporary loss of constitution and the permanent loss of a small amount of Life-Energy. In Life-Energy we see the first signs of the role-playing side of the game. Every being has a large but finite amount of Life-Energy which is normally lost slowly as the character ages. The accelerated loss due to magic use over a long period of time can thus cause premature ageing and eventually early death.

Volume Three, **Characters**, introduces the idea of a role-playing campaign into the Warhammer system, opening with a brief two-page description of what a role-playing game is and what a Games Master and players are supposed to do while playing one.

We are launched straight into the generation of the player character profile, which consists of fighting characteristics, personal characteristics and skills. The character's profile is randomly-generated from tables which can give rise to widely varying abilities; for instance initial weapon skill can range from Untrained to Heroic! However, generally, a slightly above-average Human/Dwarf/Elf (these being the only three character races in the game at present) will be obtained. Character advancement is by an experience points system: as each experience point total is reached any one fighting or spell-using ability is increased by a single point. After several predetermined increases, the player has a free choice as to which ability s/he wishes to increase at each subsequent stage. Volume Three is rounded off with some ideas for adventures, random encounter charts and a large-scale scenario.

Throughout Warhammer, the artwork is of a high standard and the text is, in the main, clear and concise, often with an element of humour (one suggestion for a special wandering monster is an Italian Vacuum Cleaner Salesman!). One bad point is that there are no quick-reference sheets for the combat system. If these rules had been only for mass combat, I am sure that some would have been included. However, I expect they will appear in the form of a GM's screen at an extra cost at some time in the future!

My main criticism of Warhammer is that Citadel seem to have provided a mass combat system which cannot be used to the full by the characters the role-playing section generates, at least not until they have become experienced enough to lead, rather than be led, into battle. The mass combat rules are very good, probably some of the best available for fantasy combat; but surely a better way of selling them would have been to publish them separately from the role-playing rules as a stand-alone supplement.

Finally, then, if you are looking for a mass fantasy combat system, I would recommend Warhammer; but if all you want is a fantasy role-playing game, it would perhaps be better to look elsewhere, at least until further role-playing supplements have been brought out.

Chris Hunter

***Warhammer** is made by Citadel of 10 Victoria Street, Newark, Notts, and the boxed set costs £5.95*

WIZARDS

First impressions are always important and on this point **Wizards** scores highly; the artwork is good, the playing pieces are well printed and properly cut and the playing board is strongly made in the best Avalon Hill tradition.

The aim of the game is relatively simple; find the six sacred gems and deliver them to the Druid High Priest at the centre of the stone circle and so expel the Evil which is threatening to engulf the islands (and, we are led to believe, the whole world!). The setting-up is interesting in that the 'islands' are placed on the sea playing area at the discretion of the players and so a different configuration is usually produced for each game. The game itself is not so simple!

After distributing the islands across the board the players set out on their adventures — the trouble is that they cannot gain sacred gems until they have joined one of the three orders, Wizards, Sorcerors or Druids and reached the 4th level. Promotion is achieved by gaining points in Knowledge, Perception and Power, and these are earned by successfully completing tasks assigned to them. Unfortunately travel is difficult and often frustrated by the player's piece being transported, attacked by demons or the dragon, and until higher levels are attained the spells available do not amount to much. Changing Orders is sometimes helpful, but the player has to start again at the bottom level — although promotion can be rapid as the points gained to date are kept.

After the first two rounds, the Great Evil starts to take over the islands, one by one, and as the only way to hold it in check is for the players to accomplish ten tasks between them it soon becomes apparent that some level of co-operation is necessary — not something that AH gamers will be used to! This makes for a curious game as the players strive to achieve balance in their strategy but it adds to the interest.

The game works best with the full number, six, playing, while the solitaire is most frustrating as it becomes virtually impossible to stop the evil taking over; I confess I cheated by doubling the number of turns to the round! The 'telepathic' version with partners was not tried.

One criticism is that the rules contain so many exceptions that the game is rather slow until the players become familiar with them all; nevertheless the game succeeds in that it is enjoyable to play — but do not expect to finish it quickly; it is very much an 'all day game'.

Overall, a good game; long, but interesting and fun.

J C Conner

***Wizards** (£14.95) is from Avalon Hill, 650 High Road, N.Finchley, London N12 ONL.*

Distributors' names are given for information only.

TRAVELLER

Traveller was one of the first role-playing games and is still one one of the best. It assumes a vibrant interstellar empire encompassing large numbers of stars and planets. Adventures take place anywhere the referee desires — on board starships, in asteroid belts, on harsh ice or desert worlds, on sophisticated high tech worlds or on the bottoms of oceans. For Traveller's great strength is its flexibility allowing players and referees to create any type of adventure they desire.

Unlike most other role-playing games where players start the game as fresh faced adolescents, Traveller characters enter the game already experienced. At the age of eighteen they enter one of the Imperial services where they receive training in the skills common in a future society. It is quite possible to start adventuring at forty-six or even older. Generally, characters who stay in the services for a long time will gain more skills than those who leave early, but have increased chances of being killed before the real adventuring begins. Characters who survive a long service career also age, weakening their physical attributes. Generating characters is almost a game in itself as players balance out the risks of being killed and ageing against the number of skills gained.

Having completed their service careers characters muster out, receiving benefits such as money, weapons, star ships and improvements to abilities. They then equip themselves and begin adventuring.

Combat tends to be lethal, a wound from a rifle or laser carbine will usually result in unconsciousness and possibly even death. Traveller is not a game which caters for senseless violence. It encourages role-playing and players are helped by a large number of skills geared to social interaction. Many enjoyable Traveller sessions can be played without any one drawing a weapon!

Starsystems and planets are generated by dice rolls which sometimes give rise to very illogical results. These need to be handled carefully and may need changing slightly to create believable worlds. Too literal an interpretation can create ridiculous combinations such as overcrowded vacuum worlds where the inhabitants do not have the technology to produce the oxygen vital for life support.

Planets once generated consist of a string of numbers which indicate the rudimentary nature of the world and its type of starport — from the lowly Class E, little more than a rock marked out for landings, to the huge and luxurious Class A capable of building starships. A world's description contains its size, type of atmosphere, amount of water present, population size, government type, degree of law enforcement and level of technology. To bring the individual worlds to life, additional details need to be created by the referee. How much depends on the type of campaign. If players spend most of their time in space trading, then extra details are rarely required. If they are planet-bound the initially only one planet needs any elaboration, others can be worked out when the players are ready to move on.

Originally written for experienced role players Traveller in places was often difficult to grasp. With the appearance of the Traveller Book and Starter this is no longer the case. These both carefully guide the beginner through the rules taking nothing for granted. The Starter Set comes in an eye-catching box containing two booklets (one the rules and the other all the necessary charts and tables) and two ready-to-play adventure scenarios. The Book is hardbacked, of similar size to the AD&D books and also contains two adventures. Both present the basic Traveller rules clearly and logically with many examples to show how the rules work. To further fire the imagination they are copiously illustrated with starships, weapons, vehicles and alien animals. Included is a referee's guide which provides excellent ideas for setting up and running campaigns.

Differences between the two are slight. The space combat rules in the Set are simpler and a lot easier to grasp than the ones in the Book. The Set lacks the sections on drugs and experience from the original rules. The omission of the drugs could pose a few problems as these feature in a couple of available adventures. The Book contains more information for the referee and an essay on the history of the Imperium.

They both contain more or less the same mistakes. Body pistols are shown doing two different types of damage — 2d and 3d. Going by the original rules 2d is correct. Most of the mistakes can be spotted as they are fairly obvious but they should not be there at all. A glaring omission from the Book is the effect of pulse lasers in space combat. These hit at -1 but gain two damage rolls on the target.

The rules cover the whole universe and in places are naturally sketchy. They contain no alien races, no futuristic weapons other than lasers and none of the huge battleships reminiscent of Star Wars. This omission is not as great as it may appear, for there is a vast amount of supplementary material available which fills these gaps and gives a consistent background to the universe.

A large number of future releases are planned which will add more depth. If you have never played Traveller and wish to start, now is a good time. Never before has it been as easy to get started. Both rules sets contain ready-to-play adventures and ideas for others. If you can afford the extra Book is well worth having for its harder wearing cover and the extra material it contains. Both are, however, excellent and highly recommended. Your journey to the stars starts here. Old hands need not apply.

Jim Bambra

***Traveller** is a GDW game, distributed by Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP. The Starter Edition costs £7.95, and the Traveller Book £10.95*

These games are available from hobby shops

Special Review

Creating ADVENTURE programs on the BBC MICRO *by Ian Watt*
Interface Publications/Addison Wesley, 1983. 128pp, £6.95.

A number of articles have appeared in US and British magazines explaining programming techniques for writing Adventures, and there are one or two US books such as the Captain-80 book containing BASIC Adventure listings, but this is probably the first book from a UK author containing listings of Adventures together with a comprehensive explanation of how they work.

Complete listings

Several Interface titles are currently being reprinted with different covers, but the contents of this book seem to be entirely new. Although it contains complete listings for three games, the publishers do not seem to be offering a tape of the programs for those who do not want to type them in, a common practice with other books. There are signs of haste in the preparation of the book; typos abound, and the copyright notice, strictly interpreted, would require you to obtain written permission before typing in the listings for your own use, although you are obviously intended to do so.

Despite the description of the book as a general guide to Adventure-writing, it covers only one type of Adventure, similar to the format used in the Scott Adams series. Like these, the games in the book are text-only, with two-word input, and the screen display shows a description of current location, followed by a list of objects seen and directions of movement, and a user prompt at the bottom. One innovation is that the objects carried by the player are constantly displayed; on the other hand the descriptions are unusually terse. Unlike the Scott Adams series, though, the games are entirely in BASIC. So you get no graphics, animation, sentence-parsing, autonomous NPCs, variable player-characteristics or multiple players. There aren't even any mazes, but there are events which may or may not kill the player on a random basis; this is frowned on by Adventure players of the 'classical' school. There is a minimal use of sound.

All the programs seem to be offered as tested and suitable for the 16K BBC Micro, though no mention is made of incompatabilities between different ROMs. The listings are straight printer dumps, and contain no obvious errors, but a cheap matrix printer with no descenders has been used, making them very tedious to read. Copious information is provided in a separate chapter on rewriting the programs for other computers, with emphasis on the ZX81.

Although the author goes to the extent of providing sections of ZX81 listing to show how the rewriting is to be done, I would not expect the longer second and third programs in the book to fit a 16K ZX81; many memory compaction techniques would have to be employed which are not explained in the book, and the alternative method of structuring data suggested by the author is not a very suitable one, causing programs to run far too slowly on the Sinclair machine. Most other computers could handle the programs more easily, but an unusual technique is employed in all three programs of repetitive DATA-reads: the program is constantly scanning through the same chunks of data to find the right room-description or object-description to print. This works well enough on the BBC, with its nippy BASIC and flexible RESTORE-pointers, but would cause trouble on a machine lacking these features.

Simple Adventures

The book tends to fall between two stools. If you want to play the games, you would need to find someone else to type in the listings for you, as the messages are all in clear rather than encrypted text. But they are all fairly simple Adventures and might take less time to solve than to type in. It is as well that they are simple as there are no HELP-messages at all. If, on the other hand, you want to study the techniques used, the book certainly allows you to do this — but you do not need all three listings; all the techniques employed can be observed in the first and the others do not really add anything. The structural aspects of the programs are adequate for Adventures of this level of complexity but could get you into trouble if you tried to adapt them for more ambitious programs. Everything is a mass of GOTOs and the programs use the approach of falling-through a long list of IF/THEN tests at the start of every cycle, rather than using sub-routines and direct branching. Time delays would multiply as the logic of such a program became more complex, and the programmer is restricted to a very narrow range of responses by the (fairly small) vocabulary of the game; all the permutations of user input that have not been catered for are collected in a general-purpose dustbin routine which prints 'I don't understand' and gives up.

Clear documentation

The strongest point of the book is the program documentation, which is clear and copious. There is also a good indexed list of the meaning in program terms of all the objects and commands, a less useful chapter with vague predictions about the march of technology, and a sketch for an Adventure for the reader to complete. This illustrates the weakest point of the book, the author's tendency to think of illogical solutions to the puzzles he poses. Things just happen; sought-after objects materialise out of thin air for insufficient reasons; the player finds himself killed off by the programmer's misunderstanding of the laws of Physics. This is just the sort of thing to avoid if you do not want to be strangled by the players of your Adventures. But if you have no previous experience of Adventure-writing, this is a good place to start; the programs are straightforward enough to allow you to get to the stage of composing your own first Adventure quite quickly. Once you become more ambitious, though, it will be necessary to unlearn some of the lessons derived from the book.

Mike Costello

Next month Mike's Imagination Machine column will look at the recent levelling off of the micro computer boom.

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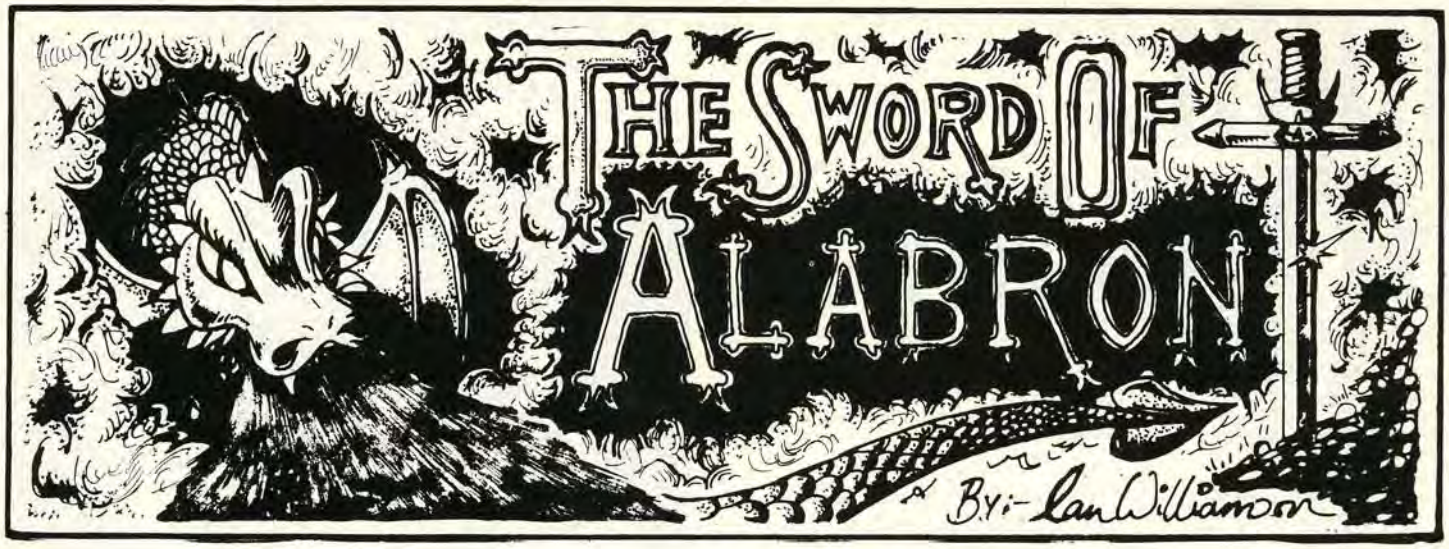
THE SWORD OF ALABRON
By:- Ian Williamson

REG "THE BOLD YET RATHER SILLY," HAS FALLEN OVER!
...WHICH ISN'T ADVISABLE, (SO IT IS WRITTEN) ESPECIALLY DURING COMBAT!
JUST AS REG HERE IS PREPARING FOR HIS FIRST AND ONLY VISIT TO THE "SEVEN HEAVENS" A LOUD JEER GOES UP FROM THE WEST.....
...MOMENTARILY HIS ORC EXECUTIONERS HALT!
YAAAA!
OI!
?
DONT LAUGH LADS! ITS DWARF-BANE AND HIS PATHETIC "WARBOYS."

ENTER "SPIKE" DWARF-BANE, FEARLESS HOBGOBLIN WITH HIS "WEST-CAVE WARBOYS"
HAH! WHERES "GOBNOX?"
NOT LOST ANOTHER LEADER HAVE YA? (chuckle)
SORRY TA HEAR SUCH... TRAGIC NEWS!

ITS ALSO RUMOURED THAT HE NEVER BOTHERED TO ROLL FOR CHARISMA....
GET LOST MELLON FACE!
YEAH! "GO MILK A DRAGON!" THIS IS OUR PATROL!
EVER BEEN IN TWO HALVES BEFORE BIG MOUTH?!
HA...HA...HA...

AN ARGUEMENT DEVELOPS...
EXCUSE ME!.. PERHAPS WE COULD CONTINUE THE DUEL NOW?
ER, I'D REALLY LOVE TO BUT, "YOU KNOW" WEVE GOT SERIOUS BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO!
"SOME OTHER TIME PERHAPS"
FINE!

JUS' W-WAIT 'TIL THE RED TROLL.. 'EARS AB-B-BOUT THIS! J-JUS' YOU W-WAIT.
YEAH! ROCKDEVIL'S SICK OF YOU. SO GET OFF OUR PATROL!
PAH, ROCKDEVIL!? I'D EAT HIM FOR LUNCH.. ONLY HE'D PROBABLY CRAWL BACK UP MY THROAT!
BASICALLY "LADS" I'M TAKING CHARGE OF THIS PATROL NOW.
♫"OVER OUR DEAD BODIES"♫
LOOK, WHERE I COME FROM, WE HAVE "LAWS."
SYSTEMS.. DEVISED TO RESOLVE THESE..
..DIFFERENCES" IF PERHAPS YOU'D ALLOW ME TO-
KEEP OUT OF THIS TINHEAD!
WE ARE RESOLVING THIS OVER A FEW "ORC CORPSES." RIGHT BOYS?
RIGHT SPIKE!
SPLAT
AND SO IT WAS, THE ORC PATROL DID WAR UPON THE GOBLINS. That day many plummetted, to their doom. Yet many more arrived! Many left,... many stayed. Many felt they'd leave only if tea was, in fact, ready.... However,
..many had dined prior to the battle. Some did in that moment of glory bring PACKED LUNCHES.. (though many were stolen it is said). and throughout that historic day did horns blow incessantly throughout those troubled tunnels.
CRUNK
MUNCH
HB 20 AC 4 -3-1?
... SOMEONE HAD LEFT THEIR CHARIOT PARKED BLOCKING THE CORRIDOR AND THEY WANTED THEM TO SHIFT IT!

THROUGHOUT THE BATTLE REG CONTINUED TO PLEAD WITH NEW ARRIVALS TO CEASE THIS "SENSELESS" WAR.
LISTEN...YOU DONT HAVE TO FIGHT!
"GET LOST PAL"! I KNOW MY RIGHTS.
A FEW SECONDS LATER..
AHA! SO YOU WISH TO FIGHT?
(YOU SAID IT.) YOU CANT DENY IT! COME ON THEN DEMONSPAWN!
"UG-BADS' GRERBELSCHNIG!" NOT THAT PALADIN AGAIN!
MAYBE AFTER THE BATTLE O.K? (no promises)
UNTIL IN ABJECT DISMAY HES FORCED TO GIVE UP..
ITS NO USE! THEY'RE IGNORING ME. THEY'RE NOT EVEN "IMPRESSED" BY MY PHYSICAL PROWESS!
WHAT-EVER SHALL WE DO, NIGHTSWIFT
JUST LISTEN TO THAT FOOL!
"WHATEVER SHALL WE DO?"
ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS?
WE'RE TRAPPED ON BOTH SIDES AND HE'S CONCERNED THAT THEY'RE KILLING EACH OTHER
AND "YEA, THOUGH THEY BURNT THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DREAD (AT CLOSE TO WARP SPEED) THEY FEARED NO EVIL"
VROOOOOOM
ACROSS THE BRIDGE THE QUEST WENT, AND ON INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS OF SHAAN-DROS (filed under LUNATIC(S))
E'SCOOZ ME MATE...WHERE'S 'UH...BATTLE?
DOWN 60ft, TURN RIGHT AT THE ROCK BRIDGE! YOU CANT MISS IT MATE..
ON THEY RACE UNTIL THEY REACH A CROSSROADS, EITHER SIDE ARE DOORS... AHEAD IT RUNS 20ft TO A BLANK WALL! HEAVY FOOTSTEPS MOVE TOWARDS THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT...
THUD
NEXT THE LAIR OF THE RED TROLL

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